Manitoba farmers can grow the equivalent of seven to 11 barrels of oil an acre

Cash in on high oil prices by growing switchgrass

BY ALLAN DAWSON
FWW staff

Food is cheap. Oil sure isn’t. So maybe farmers should switch — to switchgrass. Renewable fuel crops can replace non-renewable oil, boost the local economy, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions — and earn carbon credits to boot. In fact, by growing switchgrass on 15 per cent of their land, Canadian and American farmers could generate more energy each year than the Alberta tar sands, according to Roger Samson, executive director of a Montreal-based organization called REAP—Resource Efficient Agricultural Production.

“That energy equivalent is around 1.5 billion barrels of oil (a year) or four million bales of oil a day, which is five per cent of the world’s oil supply,” Samson told about 80 people here last week at a conference organized by the Frontier Centre for Public Policy and the Manitoba Sustainable Energy Association.

Increasing oil prices and efforts to curb global warming spell economic opportunity for farmers, especially in Manitoba. Here’s why. Fuel oil at 70 cents a litre produces heat costing well over $20 a gigajoule (gj). A one-tonne bale of switchgrass that the farmer gets $55 a tonne for, plus $45 a tonne to pelletize for a total of $100, produces heat for $5.50 a gigajoule. That’s one-quarter of the cost of oil.

“These are the economics that are going to let farmers take on big oil, big natural gas and farmers can genuinely repeat the prosperity of rising energy prices,” Samson said.

“This cheap rural energy will stimulate the entire rural econony.”

Bush on board? Even U.S. president George Bush, an oil man before getting into politics, referred to switchgrass as a possible energy alternative during his recent State of the Union address.

Switchgrass, a warm-season perennial grass, grows well in southern Manitoba, Samson said. He estimates it will yield 2.4 to 3.6 tonnes an acre in Western Canada, equivalent to seven to 11 barrels of oil an acre. Last week a barrel of light, sweet crude for March delivery was around US$65 or C$75, but there are predictions it will hit US$80 or even US$90. If Manitoba farmers can earn $55 to $60 a tonne growing switchgrass it could generate $144 to $216 gross an acre, based on Samson’s yield estimates. Although switchgrass has lower production costs, it’s

Biodrainage can reduce excess moisture risk

BY LAURA RANCE
Associate editor

Low farmers manage the top four to six feet of soil can influence how many drain- age ditches they need, a University of Manitoba agronomy professor says.

“When we think of water, we have a tendency to think of engineering solutions,” Martin Entz said the Manitoba Soil Science Society’s annual workshop. “I want to talk about biological water management.”

Speakers at the plenary session on managing excessive moisture repeatedly referred to the need for more biological solutions to the issue of water management in Prairie cropping systems.

Prairie soils seem to suffer from either a feast or a famine when it comes to moisture, which makes biological resiliency an important strategy for handling both extremes. Much of the research focus over the past century has been aimed at drought management.

But soils in some areas, particularly on the eastern Prairies, have a higher risk of excessive soil moisture, said Entz. He’s been working with graduate students over the past 15 years to develop cropping systems that can thrive under such conditions.

University of Manitoba soil scientist Paul Bullock said it is virtually impossible to assess agrometeorological risk for excess soil moisture in Manitoba because there is very little data available.

“The difficulties experienced with excess soil moisture recently in Manitoba emphasize the need to expand our knowledge of the risk levels for excess moisture, in the same way that risk levels have been explored for moisture deficit and drought,” Bullock said.

Springs getting wetter

April through June precipitation levels have been rising in several locations across the province since the 1980s. The correlation between that and excessive soil moisture varies with factors such as the soil type and its saturation level at the time the precipitation occurs.

While it is possible to calculate the potential of heavy rainfall events based on past

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This week’s banner photo by Billy Dudek

POSTMA: LA PRAIRIE

SWITCHGRASS CROWD: PACKED MEETING: Around 80 people attended a meeting on the merits of growing switchgrass to produce energy in Portage la Prairie February 2.

SIGNATURE

By Allan Dawson

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In Brief...

**BioDrainage**

*From Page 1*

weather records, without long-term records of soil moisture to compare against precipitation records, it is difficult to estimate the frequency of excessive moisture conditions, he said.

Entz said there is little farmers can do about changing the texture of their soil. "People who care about their bottom line can influence their ability to handle water through crop selection, their tillage practices and even over-all fertility."

"The way we treat our soil is very, very important," he said, showing slides of soil samples that densely compacted with virtually no filtration in a conventional rotation compared to samples that are looser, porous and rich in organic matter in an organic rotation.

Entz noted there is a growing body of literature that raises questions about the growing use of fungicides in crop production because of their negative impact on biological diversity. "It changes our soil," he said.

Entz said the crop selection and how crops are cycled through the rotation could affect the amount of water contained in the top layers of soil.

**When we think of water, we have a tendency to think of engineering solutions.**

— MARTIN ENTZ, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

"Dry beans are not water-tolerant plants," he noted. The rising acreage of dry beans in the province has been followed by increased salinity related to their lack of water use.

However, soybeans and fababees show exceptional flooding tolerance, followed by oats, sunflowers, wheat, corn, barley, canola and dry beans. However, Entz said a crop's water tolerance can also be affected by air temperature, the growth stage at which the excessive moisture occurs, the crop's nutritional status and disease status. Often it is disease that wipes out a crop after a flooding event rather than the flooding itself.

Hamblin promotes biotech: Morin-area farmer Ron Hamblin is one of two featured in a new video webcast at biotech-gmo.com, in which he and Spanish farmer Pedro Lerín discuss the impact of biotech crops on their operations. "Biotechnology has allowed us to do things that we haven't been able to before," says Hamblin. "It's given us the opportunity to clean up fields, to grow different crops," the interviewers as well as one with Manitoba's Agri-Enns can also be found at Morgans' Conversations about Plant Biotechnology website: www.monsanto.com/biotech-gmo/new.htm

Small increase in consumer price would boost bio-energy

**BY ALLAN Dawson**

**FWM staff**

**C**onsumers need only pay a fraction more to get "green" renewable energy, he said, adding an increasing number of the public are beginning to think of bio-energy products and services. "People are starting to question what they are buying when they pay a fraction of a cent more to get a polluting energy product," he said.

Hamblin said renewable energy products and services could be promoted "by marketing the product as something that is clean and reliable." He said the public is receptive to information about bio-energy products. "The Ottawa market is also receptive to the message about the need to expand bio-energy," he said.

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**When you demand performance, Touchdown iQ delivers.**

**BioDrainage**

*From Page 1*

enriched soil rich in organic matter in an area densely compacted with very, very important," he said, wiping out a crop after a flooding event rather than the flooding itself. How crops are managed in a rotation can also have an impact. "Sunflowers reliably use two inches more soil water than most small grain crops," he said. "Sunflowers can reach down to six feet."

Retrieving nutrients also

Including plants such as sunflowers or perennial forages that can retrieve soil water from lower depths in a rotational cycle can help de-water soils for other crops that follow. They are also useful for tapping into nutrients that have leached to subsurface layers below where shallow-rooted crops can reach.

Entz said there are also opportunities to pull additional water from the soil by using double cropping and relay cropping. For example, spring broadcasting red clover into a fall-planted winter wheat crop can pull an extra two inches of water from the soil by fall. Plus it leaves behind some nitrogen.

Or farmers can sow a second crop following the removal of a crop in the early autumn to take advantage of the remaining growing-degree days.

Entz also offered some non-traditional engineering solutions, noting there are now more than 100,000 hectares being farmed in Australia using raised-bed cropping systems. Small trenches between narrow blocks of crops are left intact for several years.

While farmers on the Prairies are accustomed to thinking of shelterbelts as a defence against soil erosion, they may serve other purposes as well. R. Sri Ranjan, who is with the Department of Biosystems Engineering at the University of Manitoba, said another biodrainage approach to use trees or shrubs. "Deep-rooted trees can draw water from deep layers and have a much larger impact on lowering the water table compared to shrubs," he noted. They can also serve as an interceptor drain, capturing subsurface flows well before they reach the farmed area. Certain tree species are better than others at removing salt from the subsoil, he said.

While an increasing number of farmers are turning to tile drainage as a means of protecting their crops from excessive moisture, he noted they increase the potential for nutrient and pesticide runoff from agricultural fields. laura.rance@fiwonline.com

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All buys Lloydminster terminal: The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool has agreed to purchase SaskPool's 50 per cent interest in their jointly held Lloydminster Terminal. The move would take the economics of owning a grain elevator in the Saskatchewan-Alberta border city when dramatically with the completion of a major terminal for a plant that is expected to consume over 350,000 tonnes of grain annually. The Lusindale terminal was originally built as a joint venture between Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Alberta Wheat Pool in 1994.
There are impediments to bio-energy

BY ALLAN DAWSON
FIIW staff

Even though creating energy from biomass makes economic, social and environmental sense, there are impediments. In a recent presentation at the University of Manitoba professor Eric Bibeau told a meeting on bioenergy here February 2, this time also less convenient. Sure, bales of straw from barley, can be burned in a furnace or pelletized and then fed into a furnace, but it’s not as easy as turning on a natural gas valve.

Biomass also faces some cheap competition from coal, which creates pollution and adds greenhouse gas to the atmosphere — costs that aren’t currently reflected in the price.

Bio-energy is not a new idea. Pulp and paper mills have run waste wood for years. Biomass is really like a solar battery, he said. When burned properly it creates energy with very little pollution. And while it creates materials from animals, that gas is used by plants, which in turn are harvested so it’s a closed loop system.

Bibeau has been working on biomass systems that create CO2 into the atmosphere, but because it comes from plants, there’s no net increase since new plants will use the CO2 as they grow. It’s a closed loop, air-eating process, which when burned adds more CO2 to the system.

“Farmers have a vested interest in making Kyoto work,” Samson said.

Ethanol — old technology? Instead of the federal and provincial governments encouraging ethanol production from corn, most of which is subsidized and imported from the United States, home-grown biofuels such as switchgrass are expected to be promoted, Samson said.

“Why are we subsidizing grain-based ethanol with 1970s technology?”

“Canada is a net importer of corn. Why are we subsidizing corn ethanol plants when Canada is providing subsidies to American farmers? It’s nice that we’re supporting American farmers, but I think there are some Canadian farmers that want some support too.”

Even when it comes to ethanol and bio-energy has the advantage, according to Samson. During the process switchgrass produces lignin, which can be used to fuel the ethanol-making process, instead of natural gas. That results in net energy gain of 57 gigajoules for switchgrass made into ethanol, compared to just 21 for corn.

“And that’s why the corn ethanol industry is likely to collapse in the future and why it needs subsidies, because it’s very energy intensive,” Samson said.

“Corn ethanol is a weak green energy policy tool and development policy that needs to be re-visted,” adason@fiwonline.com

Free building plans: A U.S. Midwest Plan Service catalog of plans contains more than 175 low-cost and free agricultural publications, some downloadable, from major U.S. universities. The catalogue also has a list of more than 100 free, downloadable building plans. It is available from the site’s website, www.mpsw.org. MWP/S is a publishing consortium of 12 U.S. universities and the USDA. Topics include house and barn plans, livestock, constructing and remodeling agricultural buildings, commercial greenhouses and homes, and several other management topics.

New barley initiatives: The Canadian Wheat Board last week announced the 2005-06 initial payment for the second feed barley pool, “Pool 8,” effective immediately for deliveries from Feb. 1 to July 30, 2006. The initial payment for no. 1 Canada Western (CW) barley is $572 per tonne. A complete listing of payments for all the grades of wheat and barley in dollars per tonne and dollars per bushel is posted on the CWB website under (link) www.cwb.ca.

Chuck Strahl new agriculture minister

Chuck Strahl, MP for Chilliwack–Fraser Canyon in British Columbia, is Canada’s new Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister Responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. Cabinet appointments were made just before press time Monday.

According to his biography, Strahl was first elected as a Reform MP in 1993, and was re-elected in 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2006. In June 1999, he was selected to serve as Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons and Chairman of Committees of the Whole. Previous to becoming Deputy Speaker, Strahl was critic for Democratic Reform, for Northern Economic Development, for Cultural Industries, for the Deputy Prime Minister, for Industry and for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. He was also Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and a member of the standing committees on Fisheries and

Chuck Strahl
MP for Chilliwack–Fraser Canyon
British Columbia, Canada
Minister of Agriculture
and Agri-Food
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Chuck Strahl was born in British Columbia in 1957 and was raised in the Fraser Valley. Prior to his election, he was a logging contractor. He and his wife, Deh, have four children.

There are impediments to bio-energy

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I once met a retired gentleman who had a wonderful idea but poor timing. He was passionate about developing a “straw pelletizer” — a mobile machine that he would take to farmers after harvest, and for a fee, turn the straw stacks into large pellets or briquets that could be used instead of coal in their stoves and furnaces.

The combine soon took over, meaning the end of the straw stack, and around the same time, fuel oil became widely available to farmers who were quick to see the economic clunkers out of coal furnaces every morning. And back then, oil prices were low and burning oil was not even thought of. They are today, and while fuel oil and diesel fuel might have seemed pretty cheap to farmers in the 1940s, they sure don’t now. Today’s grain business could be described as “value-subtracted” — taking high-priced commodities such as fuel and fertilizer and turning them into low-priced commodities — grain and oilseeds.

The idea of turning farm products into fuel has revolved in recent years, mainly focusing on ethanol and more recently on biodiesel. The latter has come to hold promise. The technology is relatively simple, requiring little purchased energy. It can also use waste products from cooking and rendering. And if canola oil is selling at north of $1 a pound, you might as well burn the stuff.

Ethanol is to say the least, controversial. But leaving aside the arguments about net energy gain, the need for government subsidies to be economic, and that it might require import of U.S. corn, there’s the basic reality that it’s still based on that “value-subtracted” process of growing cheap grain. And if you’re growing a crop for fuel, why use less than half the production, in this case only the kernels?

For more than 30 years it’s been said that genetically or other technical improvements to the distillation products would allow ethanol to be made from straw or wood. We’re still waiting, but should this process become a reality, what would that mean? The price of grain would collapse, and the sectors that grow corn specifically for power, such as switchgrass.

There would be no better way to boost grain prices than to take 10 or 15 per cent of cropland, and turn it into energy. This is the best opportunity in a long time to provide a new and stable source of farm income. This idea is about to go mainstream — in fact it did last week, with President Bush talking on the switchgrass/bandwagon. Farmers should get on too.

Unrealistic expectations won’t resolve BSE concerns

BY ELBERT VAN DONKERSGOED

“This finding is not unexpected,” read the news release from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency revealed Canada’s fourth case of BSE, bovine spongiform encephalopathy — often referred to as mad cow disease —in a six-year-old cow born and raised in Alberta.

Everyone close to the beef sector held their breath. Would the Americans slam the border shut again as they did in May 2003? Would they overreact again, in response to a Canadian system of safeguards that can identify the small number of BSE cases that are expected to be found in the North American cattle herd?

The Agency said in its news release that the test result confirmed that they anticipate no change in the status of beef or live cattle imports to the United States from Canada.

We are breathing easy again — or are we? The breeding stock of all our ruminants is still not welcome in the U.S. Hamburger from older cattle, perfectly safe for Canadians to eat, remains locked out of the U.S. markets.

Why do some trade barriers remain? Based on the BSE guidelines of the World Organization for Animal Health, Canada is a minimal risk country. So is the U.S. The two North American neighbors are of equivalent risk for BSE. So, why does one country react with apocalyptic solutions to the other’s efforts to manage the risk of BSE?

We’ve painted ourselves into a corner. For years we touted our safeguards — Canada and the U.S. basically developed them in tandem — as ironclad, impervious. BSE did not exist in North America, we said. Import controls, surveillance of the domestic herd, removal of specified risk material, and a feed ban, added up to an improbable firewall to the disease that was devastating cattle production in Great Britain.

We didn’t learn our lesson in May 2003 when our first BSE-sick cow was identified. We promised elimination of the problem — instantly.

It is now 2006, and our choice is slowly becoming more realistic. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency said in its news release last week, “This finding is not unexpected,” and “This detection is consistent with a low level of disease…” BSE exists in the North American cattle herd at a very low level — a minimal risk level and it’s likely to be there for some time to come. Even traces of BSE are highly infectious, and infections seldom result in physical symptoms until years later. There’s a long road ahead, of fine-tuning our already robust firewalls to manage the risk with which we have to live.

Unrealistic promises and apocalyptic over-reactions, like border restrictions will not help us or the Americans manage the minimal risk of such an elusive disease.

Elbert van Donkersgoed P.Ag. (Hon.) is the Strategic Policy Advisor of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario. www.christianfarmers.org
Rancher chooses Ranchers Choice

BY COLIN MCKAY

In 2003, BSE hit our country and cattle herders with a vengeance that none of us could have ever dreamed of. We all went to meet- ings to find out what each of us had to try and do to survive. From the Interlake area some cattle people like ourselves came up with the idea of a slaughter plant. They came around the province with the idea of a plant and figured by the next fall or sooner they would have it built. Well like most cattlemen and farmers, if you need a building built, you buy the material and get it built! But these fellows had no idea of what they would have to overcome before it could be built. As general manager Bruce McDonald said at a Boissevain meeting this fall, most projects this size take two to three years.

Well, we are in the third year and it is almost ready to go. Most people are up set it has taken so long — the red tape involved. They had cattle taken care of first instead of later to keep everybody happy in government and the general public. Bruce also said at the meeting if the 12,000 cattle producers in Manitoba would each put up $800 we would have had enough money to see it completed.

If you put up $100 for each hook you are in for the life of the plant and not just five years like some plants. If you take $1,000 and buy 10 hooks, the federal government will give you $500 more or five hooks, so each hook is worth $86 each and if you only take $10 profit for each share at the end of the year. Where can you get 15 per cent on your money at the bank?

Cattle are collected and trucked to Dauphin from central points and your trucking is paid for out of profits and if you use your own trailer, you are paid also. This way everyone is treated equally. Dauphin is the only place that stopped up to the plant and offered to help. Sure it is up north, but those farmers and ranchers will have to track a lot of their goods south to sell, so why can't we go north for a change and the trucking is paid anyway?

Brandon and Winnipeg didn't offer to help because of small but there is very little smell out of new plants these days, and this also puts some revenue into smaller commun- ities. Why not do some value- adding to our products here, instead of somewhere else get- ting the benefit? At a meeting in Souris recently the speaker told us of how Cargill at High River, Alberta has made more profit than their other nine plants in the U.S.A. since BSE. Doesn't that tell us something?

We yes used to ship fat cattle to the U.S. a few years ago and down there we were paid for the heart, liver, tongue, tail and kidneys. This more than paid for the trucking. If you went to Cargill or Brooks, none of these five items were paid to you. Well in this plant at Ranchers Choice you are paid for these items plus many more items which are put into the profit column and split at the end of the year. As well, the main part of the meat is paid for in 3-5 days, not like 30 days from other plants.

This plant will slaughter big Bulls, fat Holstein steers or exotic steers at big weight, plus cows, and if the prices are right, we will get what the animals are worth, instead of some- body else. Bulls used to be worth 70-80 cents per pound, and now they are 36-35 cents. The only way they are getting all the bulls they want so the price stays down. So why not kill here and get what they are worth. Sell one fat 2,500-pound bull and get $675 more than they are paying today and this covers your $1,000 investment. The U.S. plants here are making lots of money and sending it south. So why not start helping ourselves to get it back to what we used to get for bulls, cows and fat cattle?

Ranchers Choice has a great symbol on its package, making it good to be shipped anywhere in the world. With the maple leaf on it, the people of the world know it is from Canada.

Don't complain later

One last thing to consider. Sit on the fence if you want but if this plant is not built because a few of you wouldn't invest now, do you think in 3-5 years the question of a slaughter- plant is closed again. Next time the governments, federal and provincial, may not help us survive another crisis like the last few years. If we won't stand up to help ourselves, do you think it makes us look good in the eyes of the government? But if they see us willing to take a chance to help our industry, money may come more easily for future projects. Let's do the value-added here in Manitoba, instead of down east or the south of us — here is where the finished product should be sold from and not from some other province or state.

I hope more cattlemen and investors do some more deep thinking on this matter because this could maybe be the begin- ning of more projects to come in the future. By the looks of it, we've got to work together as one "unit" instead of everybody going different directions and getting nowhere. As farmers, we have all spent $1,000 on items with no return, but this $1,000 has a return each year which should help our families in future years.

Yes, my wife, sons and myself have invested over $2,000 in this project. This is a Manitoba project and future for our cat- tlemen, young and old.

Colin McKay and his family farm near Brandon

Roads crumbling — Maguire

Manitobans deserve to be angry about the state of our provincial roads because our roadways are crumbling and not a priority for this government.

Construction Association, the Doer NDP government has made a habit of letting portion of our transportation budget lapse. Money that should have been spent on upgrading our roads is being left unspent at the end of the year. With the conditions of Manitoba's provincial roads, how can they let this happen?

This Doer NDP government has funds, they're just not using them. The government has made a habit of letting portions of our transportation budget lapse. Money that should have been spent on upgrading our roads is being left unspent at the end of the year.

According to 2004-2005 Public Accounts documents, the Doer NDP government received nearly $1.7 billion in federal transfer payments — just over $260 million more than they had to work with. This was additional money to the province that could have been used to fix Manitoba's crumbling roadways instead this money went everywhere but into our roads.

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The wheat growers say the board could simply be directed to issue export licences

**WCWGA says CWB can be changed through regulation**

**BY ALLAN DAWSON**

The new Conservative government can easily fulfill its election promise to give western Canadian farmers “marketing choice” without holding a plebiscite or amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act, according to Blair Rutter, policy manager of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association (WCWGA).

Under section 46 (d) of the wheat board act the federal cabinet can introduce regulations allowing farmers to export wheat and barley without having to pay for an export license, Rutter said in an interview last week. Section 18 gives cabinet the power to allow domestic processors to buy wheat and barley directly from farmers without having to go through the CWB.

Those two provisions would allow the government to get around section 47.1 of the act, which says before removing the CWB’s single-desk marketing authority for wheat or barley it must first consult with the CWB’s board of directors and then farmers must vote in favour.

In 1983 the courts overturned a cabinet order to allow western farmers to bypass the CWB when exporting barley to the United States — the so-called ‘Continental Barley Market’. But Rutter said that’s because the act didn’t allow for partial deregulation. Had the order been there to remove barley completely from the CWB, Rutter believes it would have been legal. That’s exactly what the Conservative government did in 1989 with oats.

Rutter said even if there was a vote, he believes a majority would favour ending the single desk. Even if it didn’t, the CWB’s mandate is unchangeable, he said.

“When is it appropriate for the state to trample on the rights of individuals’ economic freedom to market their grain?” — BLAIR RUTTER

The Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) says farmers should decide any change to the CWB’s marketing mandate. The WCWGA says no need for a vote.

The new government promised to end single-desk selling if elected, not to hold a plebiscite, Rutter said. That way the CWB can plan its sales program.

Rutter also sees the government continuing to guarantee CWB initial payments, at least for a time. The voluntary wheat pool that ran in the late 1920s and early 1930s went broke because initial payments were not guaranteed.

Rutter thinks it can survive and the change can be made quickly. The main thing is for farmers to contract ahead of time how much grain they intend to market through the CWB, Rutter said. That way the CWB can plan its sales program.

“Then’s what we maintain the government should follow through and honour their campaign commitment,” he said.

The Eastman GO Team Launched

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Minister Rosann Wowchuk presented a grant of $1,000 to Main Buns and Butter Company while in Steinbach recently to officially open the Eastman region’s new GO Team offices.

The Hometown Manitoba grant will go towards the company’s building enhancement work.

Working out of the Steinbach, Vita and Dominion City GO Offices and the Beausejour and St. Pierre GO centres, the Eastman team’s emphasis is on farm productivity and diversification, value-added processing, new product creation, marketing, business and community development, and financing.

Leadership and youth programs are also part of the team’s plan.

Crop and livestock production, food processing, marketing of locally-produced foods and small businesses specializing in agriculture supplies and services have created a thriving rural economy in this area, Wowchuk said.

She also noted the Eastman area is supported by a strong agricultural base that includes many successful enterprises in both crop and livestock primary production and a thriving manufacturing sector.

“I am impressed with the initiative of the producers and business owners in this area in creating new enterprises and products,” said the minister in a release.

The launch featured products to illustrate the opportunities that exist for value-added development in Eastman including:

- Country Meat Deli (Steinbach) — raises and processes poultry and produces poultry-based meat products;
- Country Pet’s Co-operative (Steinbach) specializes in meats processed in Blumenort;
- Pinery Fine Natural Spring Water (Piney) — bottles and markets pure spring water locally, nationally and internationally;
- Bothwell Cheese (New Bothwell) — produces over 30 varieties and 12,000 pounds of cheese per year;
- Country Perogy Shop (Kleefeld) — makes quality perogies locally for the regional market;
- Mum’s Country Bakery (Ste. Anne) — specializes in tasty bakery treats;
- Apple Junction (Ste. Anne) — processors apples for fresh apple cider; and
- La Cucina Foods (Ste. Anne) — produces tortilla chips that enjoy local and national market recognition.

**FIW was proud sponsor of the 2005 Manitoba Conservation District Association Conservation Family Awards.**

INTERMOUNTAIN CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2005 CONSERVATION FAMILY AWARD WINNER — MARVIN & SANDRA KOVACHIK AND FAMILY

Family Name: Marvin & Sandra Kovachik & Family

Children: Cayden (41/2 months), Bryson (2), and Courtney (7)

Farm Location: Cowan, MB

Marvin & Sandra Kovachik own and operate Spruce Bluff Farms near Cowan, Manitoba. The Kovachik family have been farming for approximately 20 years and have resided at their current location since 1991. Marvin is currently a board member of the Intermountain Conservation District and sub-district chair of the Willersleather Duck sub-district.

Future farm plans include utilizing the Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) program, acquiring GPS auto steer equipment for seeding and spraying, further additions of clover rotations, designing a high wheel sprayer, developing safer storage for chemicals and fuels, more centralized grain storage and installing 250 ft of drainage tile.

Marvin and Sandra currently farm 1400 acres and co-farm another 1120 acres with Marvin’s father Joe Kovachik. Approximately 1600 acres is in hay production and the remainder is bush and natural lands.

Alternative farming practices include the use of GPS systems for field mapping and spraying.

The Kovachik farm has operated under minimum till and zero-till to minimize soil erosion. Clover rotations have been included to increase the organic matter in the soil.

Several farm banks have been established to reduce the amount of soil entering natural waterways.

Grassed strips 6 ft. in width are left adjacent to all road allowances to minimize the potential for eroded soils to enter the natural waterways.

All straw from crop is left on the field or baled and pre-sold in the summer to cattle feedlot operators.

The Kovachik family owns and operates a manured woodlot where spruce is selectively harvested for lumber and poplar is harvested for firewood.

Preservation of natural areas and wildlife habitat is also an important aspect of the Kovachik farm.

Farm diversification is a continuous issue at the Kovachik farm.

The Intermountain Conservation District is honoured to have selected the Kovachik family for recognition in the fields of agriculture and land and water stewardship.

Marvin & Sandra Kovachik and family proudly accept their family farm sign at the MCDIA Awards Banquet held in Brandon on December 6, 2005.
Sometimes there are no easy answers; and sometimes there are!

I n a recent case, a Divorce Court judge in Tennessee ordered a Mr. William Travis Gobble to shuttle two children of divorced parents back and forth between the par- ents for visitation purposes. It seems that he was the only member in the family who had a valid driver’s license. Mr. Gobble objected to this and applied to intervene in the case so that he could make his position known and get the Order to shuttle the children back and forth dismissed.

As you will see below he did pick up on some of the formal legal language that is customary when addressing a legal docu- ment. The rest of the document is a rather unusual blend of sincerity and craziness.

In the past your intervenor elected to have a fourth, or fifth beer enroute with said kids, he objected to this and applied to have one- handed.

13. The kids themselves would be a further distraction.
14. A distracted driver is a dan- gerous driver.
15. Without a fourth person to assist him, should minor children and every 3x3 box contains the letters in the word

The following is, word for word, a reprint of the Sudoku we ran Due to an error this is a FARMERS’ INDEPENDENT WEEKLY FEBRUARY 9, 2006 • PAGE 7

Answer in next week’s issue of FIIW

Front of the Sudoko we ran January 19, 2006. Thanks to all those who contacted us to point out the error. 

FARMERS’ INDEPENDENT WEEKLY

Law of the land

BY ANDERS BRUUN

Feb. 10 — Farm Credit Canada AgriSuccess workshop on succession planning. Underestimating Estate Planning, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. McIntyre Lions Community Centre, Grantham. For info contact FCC (306) 780-3486 or (306) 780-8630

Feb. 10 — Crop producers meeting. Neepawa Legion Hall, 11 a.m. To pre-register, contact Neepawa and MAFRI Office at 476-7025

Feb. 10 — Canadian Credit AgriSuccess workshop on succession planning. Vision and Goal Setting – Plan to Grow, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. The Royal Oak Inn, 3130 Victoria Ave., Brandon. For info contact FCC (204) 726-7026

Feb. 14 — Forage Day, Giroux Community Hall. For more information call Kathy 204-346-6080

Feb. 14 — Farmer Information seminar on phosphorus and the proposed Water Quality Management Zones sponsored by the Manitoba Pork Council, 7 p.m, Keystone Centre, Pioneer Lounge, Brandon. Call Manitoba Pork for more info, 1-888-893-7447

Feb. 14 — Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers (CAAR) annual convention and trade show, PrairieLand, Saskatoon, Sask. Special session with Peter MacKay, deputy leader of the Conservative Party. For more info contact 899-9300.

Feb. 15 — Farmer Information seminar on phosphorus and the proposed Water Quality Management Zones sponsored by the Manitoba Pork Council, 7pm, Somerset Community Centre. Call Manitoba Pork for more info, 1-888-793-7447.


Feb. 15-17 — Western Barley Growers Association 29th annual convention and trade show, Grande Prairie Conference Centre, 1316 – 33 Street NE – Calgary, AB. To reg- ister or for more info contact WBGA at (403) 912-3998 fax (403) 994-2006 email wmgardner@wbga.org or visit their website at: www.wbga.org

Feb. 15 – 17 In the 2005-2006 faculty seminar series featuring Gary Fulcher, Department of Food Science, on valued added opportunities in cereals processing. 3:30 pm in the Carolina Stiffon Lecture Theatre, Room 130 Agriculture Building, University of Manitoba.

Feb. 16 — Manitoba Flax Growers Association’s annual meeting, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Call Manitoba Pork for more info, 1-800-893-7447.

Feb. 16 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations – Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Shool Lake Community Centre, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. For info contact MAFRI 723-0872.

Feb. 16-17 — Manitoba Corn Growers Association’s 36th annual corn school and awards banquet, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Royal Inn, Winnipeg. For more information call 745-6661 or toll-free 877-598-5681.

Feb. 17 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations – Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Glace Bay, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For info contact MAFRI 723-0872.

Feb. 21 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations – Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Club Jovial, 15 Central Avenue, Ste. Anne. This will be a bilingual meet- ing with simultaneous English/French translation provided. 9 a.m. to noon. For info contact MAFRI 723-0872.

Feb. 24-25 — Manitoba 2006 Direct Farm Marketing Conference, Royal Oak Inn, Brandon. Growing Rural Manitoba One Business at a Time. For more info contact local MAFRI offices.


Feb. 27 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations – Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Club Jovial, 15 Central Avenue, Ste. Anne. This will be a bilingual meet- ing with simultaneous English/French translation provided. 9 a.m. to noon. For info contact MAFRI 723-0872.

Feb. 28-Mar. 1 — Designing and Marketing Foods to Boomers and other Mature Market Makers. Featured speaker is Dr. David Feast, author of Boom, and Eric Fischler, president of the Aged to look good and be good to those trends. For more information call 745-6661 or toll-free 877-598-5681.

Feb. 28 — Mar. 1 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations – Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Club Jovial, 15 Central Avenue, Ste. Anne. This will be a bilingual meet- ing with simultaneous English/French translation provided. 9 a.m. to noon. For info contact MAFRI 723-0872.

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Send your coming events of interest to Manitoba farmers to events@fiiwonline.com or by fax to (204) 257-426-257.
Canada's new agriculture minister didn't waste time getting down to business.

Mere hours after being sworn in, British Columbia MP Chuck Strahl announced grains and oilseed farmers will get "virtually" all of the $755 million in ad hoc aid promised by the former Liberal government before spring seeding.

"The cheques are being drawn up as we speak," Strahl said.

During the election campaign the Conservatives pledged to honour the Liberal promise, announced in November, and also promised to speed up the payments.

"Both long-time farmers and new farmers that just got into the system will be getting cheques very quickly and it will be in time for their planting season," Strahl said.

Cheques will start going to farmers in about two weeks, he said.

The Liberals planned to make an initial payment to farmers based on about 70 per cent of the total, with a final payment in fall.

"It's a big increase in initial payments (we're making) but we felt it was necessary not only for the farm income crisis, but of course they need that money now when they are planning their spring activities on the farm," Strahl said.

An estimated $520 million or 67 per cent of the total will come to Manitoba.

Under the program, producers of grains, oilseeds and specialty crops will receive payments based on average net sales from 2000 to 2004. The initial payment is based on 7.47 percent of average net sales. A producer with average net sales of $70,000 will receive an initial payment of $5,229.

When the program was first announced, civil servants said an initial and final payment were necessary because administrators were working with new farm income data and wanted to avoid overpaying farmers.

There were complaints that the nearly $1 billion in ad hoc farm aid the federal government announced in the spring of 2005 ($439 million of it for grain producers) didn't reflect farmers' needs since it was based on eligible net sales recorded between 1998 and 2002 under the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA). In November officials said they hoped to use sales data from at least 2003 and perhaps 2004 gathered through CAIS (Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization) program.

adawson@fiwonline.com
Canada’s grain, oilseed stocks top 10-year average

BY MARCY NICHOLSON

Canada grain and oilseed stocks soared above their 10-year averages in 2005, thanks to bumper harvests and a strong Canadian dollar, Statistics Canada said in a report released on Wednesday.

The StatsCan report pegged Dec. 31 stocks of canola at 7.5 million tonnes, up 42.5 per cent from the year-earlier figure. The large stocks break the 1999 record of 5.5 million tonnes.

“It confirms information we already know and we do look for our market to trade lower,” said one canola trader.

Canadian farmers harvested a record 9.7 million tonnes of canola last fall, so large stocks were expected. Estimates by traders polled ahead of the report ranged from 7.3 million to 7.7 million tonnes, averaging 7.5 million tonnes.

Large supplies and production have pulled down prices in recent months.

“We’ve had a really big grain and oilseed stock that has tested our logistical system, including rail cars and port congestion,” Ag Research Commodity canola analyst Nolita Clyde said. “ Crushers had opportunities but they’re restricted by capacity as well.”

Canola exports between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31 were 2.1 million tonnes, up 32 per cent from the previous year.

“We are using it quite quickly but not fast enough,” Clyde said about this year’s grain glut. StatsCan said the large stocks were the result of massive carry-in stocks and a leap in 2005 production.

Other grains

Durum stocks also rose to record volumes after all three Prairie provinces increased production and held onto sizable stocks left from the 2004/2005 crop year. Total durum stocks hit 6.4 million tonnes, up 1.5 million tonnes or 32 per cent from the previous year.

Durum exports increased 8.3 per cent to 1.7 million tonnes between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31 from the year-earlier figure. Total grain and oilseed stocks in Canada rose above their 10-year averages on Dec. 31 due to a large harvest and a strong Canadian dollar, StatsCan said.

Overall quality was below normal but was better than the prior crop year. Wheat stocks excluding durum increased 10.7 per cent to 17.7 million tonnes, up from the 10-year average of 15.7 million tonnes. Overall quality was estimated below normal but better than from the 2004/2005 crop year. All wheat stocks increased 10.6 per cent to 24.1 million from year-earlier levels. Exports dropped 9.7 per cent to 5.9 million tonnes between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31, 2004.

Some crops dropped from year-earlier levels. Barley stocks were 9.3 million tonnes, within trade estimates, and down 2.4 per cent from year-earlier levels.

FARMERS’ INDEPENDENT WEEKLY

Attention to Detail contest

Find the Answers to the Questions Below in the Farmers’ Marketplace and Enter to Win

2 Tickets to Wingfield on Ice presented at the Prairie Theatre Exchange and a Room and Breakfast for Two at the Fairmont Hotel

Paying attention to detail has never been so worthwhile.

Send your completed entry form before March 12/06 to: FIW Attention to Detail, Box 1846, Station Main, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3R1

Search our Farmers’ Marketplace (classifieds) for the answers to these questions.

• Name the 2005 Canadian Agri-Marketer of the Year ________________

• How many folks own FIW ________________

• What was the date of FIW’s first issue ________________

• Name of the 2006 Canadian Agri-Marketer of the Year ________________

• Name the 2005 Canadian Agri-Marketer of the Year ________________

• What is the price of a regular classified ad under 25 words ________________

• Name the 2006 Canadian Agri-Marketer of the Year ________________

• What was the date of FIW’s first issue ________________

Name of the production departments 2 cats ________________

Your Name: __________________________

Mailing Address: __________________________________________________________________

Postal Code: __________________________ Phone Number: __________________________

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SPONSORED BY: PTE FAIRMONT WINNIPEG
Getting feed and water to hogs in large barns is a challenge

Failing to predict feed needs hog barn challenge

BY LAURA RANCE

Those extra costs with a failure to monitor bins properly.

When those costs were transferred back onto contract growers, the rate of late orders declined, but Brumm said he doubts it was because barn managers increased their monitoring.

"Most likely, pigs were now out of feed for longer periods of time than before," he said.

A secondary cause of out-of-feed events is when feed chutes get pluged with rations that are increasingly more finely ground, with fat added. There has also been a surge in the use of Distillers' Dry Grains in hog rations, which is a byproduct of the ethanol industry.

"In the past 10 years, there has been a marked reduction in the average particle size for swine diets, driven by data that suggests a one to 1.5 cent improvement in feed conversion efficiency for each 100 micron reduction in particle size from 1,000 to 500 microns," he said.

But Brumm said a study that compared the economic impact of the loss in daily gain due to sporadic feed shortages to the feed conversion efficiency found the risk of loss to daily gain is greater. There was a half a pound loss in gain for every out-of-feed event.

"I am better off giving up feed efficiency rather than giving up sale weight," he said. When pigs miss a meal, they don't make it up for it by eating more when food is available.

Brumm said another issue that is surfacing in U.S. barns is water supply shortages due to engineer design. Typical watering systems use a three-quarter inch (inside diameter) flow pipe, which can carry 5.5 gallons per minute. A typical 1,000-head finishing barn with 25 pens on each side needs to distribute 10 gallons per minute to reach all of the pens.

As well, as the industry moves to using watering systems to medicate the herd, the units commonly used also place a restriction on the flow. He said manufacturers have only recently moved to develop larger hose attachments for the medicating units.

Nice calving percentage: 72 calves from 66 cows

Triplett calves at the Zilkey farm

BY ALLAN DAWSON

It’s not uncommon for the Zilkey’s to have twin calves. In fact, out of a herd of 130 cows, they’ve had four sets so far this calving season, but this is the first time they’ve had triplets. The chances are about one in 100,000.

The purebred Charolais cow that had the triplets was bred to a red purebred Charolais bull raised on the Zilkey farm. The cow, eight years of age, is in fine condition and is feeding all three calves, but the Zilkey’s are also bottle-feeding them. The cow had twins before.

The calves were born around 7 a.m. Perry saw the feet of the first calf and pulled it. He reached inside the cow and felt the second calf. After it was born it turned around and left the third one.

Triplets and even twins, adds work, but it also boosts the calving percentage. With 66 cows having calved so far this season, the Zilkey’s have 72 live calves on the ground.

Brandon research herds are learning what many Manitobans already know — spits are good for you

Enhancing pasture-finished beef systems

BY LAURA RANCE

Feeding sunflower seeds in a grain ration prior to slaughter helps boost nutritional quality of grass-fed beef and doesn’t hurt carcass quality, research at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Brandon Research Centre has found.

Researchers have been studying pasture finishing as a way for farmers to add value to their beef herds.

Cattle finished on grass produced beef with higher levels of conjugated linoleic acids (CLA), which are considered helpful in reducing the risk of heart disease, cancer and obesity in humans.

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Brandon research herds are learning what many Manitobans already know — spits are good for you

Including black oil sunflower seeds, which are a good source of polyunsaturated fatty acids, in the finishing ration to see if nutritional benefits can be maintained without compromising carcass quality.

Researchers also experiment—ed with adding carotene, a vitamin-like compound shown to increase fat deposition and marking in cattle. They found it had no effect on carcass quality.

Feeding the sunflower seeds to the pasture beef during the final stages of finishing increased CLA content of the beef by 50 per cent. It had a neutral effect on carcass quality.

The work complements research at the station exploring cow/calf production systems on pasture.

This research, co-ordinated by Julie Small over the past seven years, is showing that weaned calf production from an alfalfa-grass, extended grazing system averaged 2.4 per cent greater growth than from a conventional grass-drylot system. “The number of calves and birth weights were not different among systems, but the effects of the extended grazing system emerged at precalving and turnout.”

Researchers also found that grazed cows maintained their body weight and condition more consistently than drylot fed cows. The cows didn’t gain as much weight but they maintained their body condition score.

The alfalfa-grass system used in the study contained an average of 17 per cent alfalfa in the mix. Carrying capacity was similar to a grass pasture, but fertiliz—er costs for the alfalfa grass system were 52 per cent lower than what was required by the grass pasture.

This work is part of a larger study using a “conception to consumption” approach to deter—mine the impact of various pro—duction systems on the environment.

Scott said the pasture finishing of beef is far from the main—stream approach employed by the Canadian cattle industry, but it is a concept a proportion of the industry is exploring.
Manitoba Roundup

BY GLENN NICOLL

The Manitoba Annual Sale, Manitoba Livestock Expo, with 34 cattle paraded before judge Durrin Buchy of Croydon, Ont., showed that the Champion bull and female in the purebred section of the show. In conjunction with the open show at Manitoba Livestock Expo, the 96th Annual Sale of Purebred Steers was held with 32 memberships par- cipated in the sale. Three new directors were elected to the board — Connie Kunkel, Terri Kline, and Rick Killarney. The board has been working on the OTM question until 75 cents ($139) and the feed-out bulls (1030-lb. Angus-Simms sold for $1.10) was the peak price for the 8- weight steers in the. The other executive positions were sold for $1.10 and the 815-lb. Simms ($953). There was some butter fat cover ($1107). The short list of Angus-Xs at $95 ($721). Slaughter: Brandon fats had a $10.00/person registration fee for the Friday daytime program.

Maine-Anjou annual

BY GRANT MOFFAT

The Maine-Anjou Association meeting was held recently in Brandon. Members heard that the largest entry in several years was shown at Manitoba Livestock Expo, with 34 cattle paraded before judge Durrin Buchy of Croydon, Ont. Those that were worth losing were sold for $1.10 and the 815-lb. Simms ($953). There was some butter fat cover ($1107). The short list of Angus-Xs at $95 ($721). Slaughter: Brandon fats had a $10.00/person registration fee for the Friday daytime program.

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BY GRANT MOFFAT

The Manitoba Annual Sale, Manitoba Livestock Expo, with 34 cattle paraded before judge Durrin Buchy of Croydon, Ont., showed that the Champion bull and female in the purebred section of the show. In conjunction with the open show at Manitoba Livestock Expo, the 96th Annual Sale of Purebred Steers was held with 32 memberships par- cipated in the sale. Three new directors were elected to the board — Connie Kunkel, Terri Kline, and Rick Killarney. The board has been working on the OTM question until 75 cents ($139) and the feed-out bulls (1030-lb. Angus-Simms sold for $1.10) was the peak price for the 8-weight steers in the. The other executive positions were sold for $1.10 and the 815-lb. Simms ($953). There was some butter fat cover ($1107). The short list of Angus-Xs at $95 ($721). Slaughter: Brandon fats had a $10.00/person registration fee for the Friday daytime program.

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With slaughter lamb supplies running lower than usual for this time of year packers in eastern Canada are unable to contain the upward pressure while in the west Sunterra is fighting the price trend by killing lambs from its own feedlots.

The good news for producers still holding lambs is that it doesn’t look like this price trend is going to reverse anytime soon. Expectations of lamb imports from the U.S. upsetting current Canadian trends have not materialized as yet. They may not happen at all for a number of reasons, financial and regulatory combined with limited volumes of U.S. lamb that meet Canadian market specifications.

In Manitoba, the Winnipeg Livestock Yards had their lamb goat and sheep sale on February 2nd with 240 head on offer. Lambs under 85 pounds traded from $1.50 to $1.80 while the heavies, lambs over 85 pounds brought $1.20 to $1.30 per pound. Butcher ewes were still strong trading from $35 to 50 cents a pound with goats, all classes, selling from $1.20 to $1.50 a pound.

Leitch Livestock in Brandon is posting very little buying activity as supplies of slaughter and feeders lambs on farms throughout the west dwindle. Those still out in the country in very strong hands capable of feeding what they have to slaughter.

Roy Leitch reports that the volume of trade has dropped in fats and feeders. He is paying $1.25 to $1.30 a pound for slaughter ready lambs up to 115 pounds and says there is practically no trade in feeders. Leitch said butcher ewes are bringing 45 cents a pound right now but, “the market is crazy right now and you could see 60 cents on those same ewes,” according to Leitch.

Heartland Livestock Manitoba lamb buyer, Tony Atkinson, said he is paying $1.25 to $1.30 a pound for fats with feeders going to $1.35 a pound. He’s pricing his butcher-ewes boys in at 40 to 45 cents a pound with kid goats fetching from $1.10 to $1.20. Billies are trading in the 80 to 90 cent a pound range and nannies are bringing 50 to 60 cents.

Another sign that the sheep lambs and goat trade is slow can be seen at the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board where they’ve just released their first tender since January 16. The offering on this tender is roughly 180 head of slaughter lambs instead of the usual one or two truck load lots.

In southern Alberta, Michael Dyck takes care of the sheep sales for Fort McLeod Auction and he’s reporting fats trading in the $1.25 range with 80-pound feeders fetching $1.30 to $1.40. Right now Dyck is offering forward $1.45 a pound contracts for December-born lambs to be delivered in March at 70 pounds. Southern Alberta is expanding its lamb production capacity with producers in that area getting back into the business or expanding their flocks.

At a sale in December in Brandon, good bred ewes traded as high $175 a head with open ewe lambs fetching up to $172 with the average trading from $75 to $100 a head. In northern Alberta, Camrose area lamb buyer and feeder Dave Twitchel said people are still selling their flocks because of the type of wages being offered in the oil patch. This is in spite of stronger prices and an increasing price trend for the short term.

Twitchel reports butcher lambs are bringing $1.23 to $1.25 with good feeders in the 80-pound range going as high $1.40 a pound. Butcher ewes are bringing 50 cents.

The Sunterra plant at Innisfail has booked 1100 head for this week’s kill at $2.60 a pound on the rail. Hair sheep lambs are in at $2.50 on the rail. The posted live weight price runs from $1.15 to $1.27. The reason for the large price spread is to allow for quality and breed variances.

Sunterra is still on the market for feeders and is posting 1.20 to 1.30 a pound on all weights. The plant has been booked a week and a half ahead and for the past two weeks has been killing purchased lambs rather than processing from Sunterra’s own feeders.

In Cookstown at the Ontario Stockyards reports some 700 head on offer including 489 western lambs. Monday’s conditions were run down from feeders to thinning at the border. The market is in the 70 cents.

Johnson’s prices are stronger than most with 130 to 140 pounders bringing 82 to 85 while lambs over 150 pounds trading at 70 cents.

The news doesn’t get better anywhere on the American side of the border. The market is in the tank at Iowa Lamb as well, with heavy slaughtered lambs, 150 pounds and up earning 65 to 70 cents. Good lambs, 130 pounds, are also trending lower than expected at 75 to 80 cents.

The prospects for American lamb coming into the Canadian market in numbers large enough to affect prices is limited for two reasons. The first is that importing U.S. feeder lambs requires federally licensed feeding facility.

Importing slaughter weight lambs from the U.S. presents another problem. American lambs, even if they meet the Canadian slaughter weight requirements, are overweight by Canadian standards. This creates a lot of trim and extra work to get the carcass in shape for the Canadian market. That combined with the fact that corn-fed yellow compared to white barley-fed fat makes direct to slaughter imports tricky. Add to that the volume required to buffer current tight supply situations and American lambs do not look like a large threat to the Canadian lamb market as they did at first blush.
India buys 500,000 tonnes of wheat

BY HARI RAMACHANDRAN AND NAVEEN THUKRAL

NEW DELHI / REUTERS

India, stung by spiralling domestic prices, last Thursday said it would immediately import 500,000 tonnes of wheat to boost supplies, offset inflationary pressure and ensure food security.

It is the first time since 1999 that the government has resorted to importing duty free wheat through the State Trading Corporation in southern India, where open market prices have been rising in non-wheat producing states.

“Wheat will be imported by the State Trading Corporation only in the southern states. There will be no other imports of wheat except at four southern ports,” Farms Minister Sharad Pawar told a news conference, vowing to review the situation by May.

India levies a 70 per cent duty on wheat imports, making it unviable for private traders to import the grain.

“The corporation will execute the decision in a day or two and the wheat will take about 60 days to reach the ports,” Pawar said.

Traders had been expecting India, a wheat exporter in recent years, to order imports after grain agencies cut procurement but government officials said they were confident they could cope.

Australia’s monopoly wheat exporter AWL Ltd. said in December India might import about one million tonnes of wheat in 2006 to meet supply shortages.

Correction

Wiebe family: Stan Wiebe, a MacGregor-area photographer and farmer farms in partnership with his brother Don Wiebe and his father Ed Wiebe.

Incorrect information appeared in last week’s paper.
KAP delegates debate food tax to bolster farmers

BY ALLAN DAWSON
FIW staff

Resolutions are always a big part of the Keystone Agricultural Producers’ (KAP) annual meeting. Despite tough times some farmers still have a sense of humour. The last resolution passed at KAP’s 22nd annual meeting January 27 speaks to just how difficult it is to fill out Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program forms. Starbuck-area farmer Brad Rasmussen moved a resolution to change the name of the CAIS supplementary forms to Sudoku — the challenging puzzle that appears in many newspapers, including Farmers’ Independent Weekly. The motion was carried without further debate.

Given all the flooding last summer, not surprisingly three resolutions passed deal with drainage. KAP wants the Manitoba government to prevent damage to farmland caused by excess untimely flooding as a result of a lack of government planning. It also wants the Manitoba Department of Water Stewardship to design a drain maintenance program for all provincial drains and a comprehensive provincial water management strategy involving federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

Other resolutions:
• That KAP revisit mandatory membership for all agricultural producers in Manitoba.
• That KAP lobby government for the choice of Olympic average (three of five) or last three years within CAIS, whatever works better for the individual and that the calculation be done annual.
• That KAP lobby for policies that make Manitoba products a preferred source for ethanol and other green energy plants.
• That KAP support PMRA’s Own Use Import Program regulations for importing equivalent chemicals from another country.
• That KAP lobby the federal government for a cash advance program for anything grown or raised on the farm.
• That KAP lobby the Canadian government, through the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, to ensure any changes to the CWB negotiated at the WTO be implemented only at the end of the implementation period to allow the CWB to make the changes necessary to benefit farmers.
• That KAP ask Premier Doer to ensure Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Water Stewardship and Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives do a complete cost analysis to determine how, or if, the proposed phosphorus and water quality management zone regulations should be implemented and share the results with producers before adoption and ask Doer to ensure these departments work with the agricultural industry so farmers won’t be forced out of business or to incur large expenses.
• That KAP question the assessment branch about using the wrong factor number in determining tax assessments on farmland, lobby to get an appeal process and the ombudsman or auditor to investigate how widespread the miscalculation is.
• That KAP lobby the federal and provincial governments for a program to cover living costs for rural students attending post-secondary education in urban centers.
• That KAP approach the Manitoba government to pay a higher price for electricity generated by smaller (less than 10 MW) renewable energy production units.
• That KAP ask the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation to review its grading system because of major differences between its grades and market grades.
• That KAP support the Canadian Corn Producers’ efforts to persuade the federal government to commence WTO dispute settlement proceedings regarding the illegality of U.S. grain subsidies in light of a) the expiry of the so-called ‘peace clause’ and b) the recent WTO dispute settlement reports in the Upland Cotton complaint, which found several U.S. subsidy programs, which also apply to corn, violate U.S. WTO obligations.

KAP VOTING: Hands high: KAP delegates passed 34 resolutions during their 22nd annual meeting in Winnipeg January 25 to 27.
At a time like this you can’t help but notice. It’s comforting to see that not only is InVigor® the highest yielding canola, but it also provides the highest return. That makes InVigor pretty attractive. After all it’s the family business.

IN VIGOR PAYS.

A food tax to solve the farm income problem? Delegates at the Keystone Agricultural Producers’ (KAP) annual meeting in Winnipeg last month debated three dozen resolutions, but that one took up the most time. After several amendments the resolution was deferred to a KAP committee for more study.

Last fall a discussion paper prepared for the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) said a seven per cent tax on grocery store sales alone would generate an estimated $3.3 billion, but only cost consumers 0.02 per cent of their disposable income.

Starbuck-area farmer Ed Rempel said he likes the food tax idea, but said “this will never fly in a thousand years.” And if it did farmers would never get any other government support. Ray Pelletier of the Dairy Farmers of Canada warned a food tax could drive consumers to buy groceries in the United States.

Taxing food will affect farmers, who are also consumers, said Barbara Stienwandt of the Women’s Institute. Souris-area farmer Walter Finlay said if the tax raises $3.3 million, farmers won’t need any other government payments. Tax credits could be used to compensate low-income consumers for higher food prices, he said.

Robert Jacobson of the Manitoba Pork Council said out of a $25 restaurant meal, the farmer gets only a couple of bucks, while the server expects a $5 tip.

“There is something wrong here. Something has to be done.” — ROBERT JACOBSON

KAP debates food tax to bolster farmers
High-fibre flax straw may have market potential

BY LAURA RANCE  
FWI staff

Highly fibrous in its straw, flax is not exactly high on most producers’ priority list.

But if what that fibre content opened up new opportunities to add value to the crop that is mostly grown in Canada for its oilseed qualities?

That’s the premise behind an Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research program into the agronomics behind increasing the fibre content of oilseed flax crops.

Byron Irvine, the Brandon scientist heading up the research team, readily admits the supply of fibre from the 500,000 to 700,000 hectares flax grown in Western Canada annually currently vastly exceeds the demand.

Only about 20 per cent is currently processed for its fibre. Much of the remainder is burned. But producing flax for fibre used in linens and cotton-fabric blends is a big industry in Europe.

Companies currently buying flax for fibre in Canada have recently implemented near infrared spectroscopy (NIR) technology that allows them to select straw with a high fibre content.

“We’ve been caught way too many times with some company coming in wanting to set up and wanting to grow this stuff and we don’t know what we’re doing,” Irvine said.

Besides, a better understanding of the agronomic factors that contribute to more fibre production can also be used in reverse, he noted. “If they wanted to have less fibre then they sow at a little bit lower seeding rate, they sow it earlier in the year,” Irvine said.

Seeding rates, seeding dates both have an impact on the crop’s fibre yield, but the research is showing row spacing does not. “This is a positive for producers since they can use their existing seeding system without sacrificing seed or yield,” he told a recent science workshop in Brandon.

Researchers used three varieties, Flanders, Taurus and the European fibre variety Evelyn. Fibre content is not affected by seeding rate, but higher seeding rates increase stem numbers, reduced stem size and the variability of stem size. “Finer stems, with lower variation in stem size, are likely to result in more uniform retting (conversion to fibre) and improved fibre quality,” he said.

“Irvine said the climatic conditions and the types of cultivars suited to Western Canada make it unlikely this region will ever pursue flax fibre production for the linen industry.

The European cultivars used for linens are taller and produce longer fibres. However, Irvine said there is potential for the type of fibre quality produced in Canadian flaxseed to be used in cotton blends. “Natural fibres are becoming more important,” says Irvine.

“Cotton is a major world crop,” he said.

Irvine said there is work breeders can do to improve the fibre content of existing oilseed varieties to some extent without sacrificing yield. But at that point, the challenge becomes managing agronomy and selecting techniques to expand the market potential.

The way he envisages it, the selection process could work similar to how malt barley is selected. “Barley is barley, but with malt barley you tweak it a little. You do what you can to optimize your chances of getting selected,” he said.

Or pricing for flax straw could be indexed according to the fibre quality and content.

Increasing the market potential for flax straw could combine with efforts to increase the food and feed markets for the oilseed to make flax a more competitive choice for Prairie farmers, he said.

“It would sure be nice to do something other than to burn it,” he said.

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PAGE 16 • FEBRUARY 9, 2006

New study to help battle with blackleg

WGRF RELEASE

Helping western Canadian canola growers win the long-term battle with blackleg is the goal of a new, three-year study supported by the Endowment Fund, administered by Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF).

The study will build a new base of knowledge on changing populations of the pathogen that causes blackleg. This will allow producers to better select canola varieties that have resistance to the pathogen types of most concern to their specific growing area. It will also fuel the development of new varieties that have better resistance against the ever-shifting pathogen population.

There are many commercial varieties available to growers that have some form of resistance to blackleg, but the pathogen population has evolved to the point that there are now at least several strains in isolated areas of Western Canada that show the ability to overcome this resistance,” explains Dr. Roger Rimmer, leader of the study.

“We don’t know what the basis of resistance is in cultivars. Thus, these new strains will potentially be damaging on some cultivars but probably not all. To avoid losses, we need the ability to define and monitor the different types of the pathogen that are out there.”

Dr. Roger Rimmer and colleagues plan to use the genetic basis for resistance to develop single gene differential lines to provide more precise information on the pathogen types of most concern.

The challenge with this system is that it only discriminates between four types of the pathogen - PG2, PG3, PG4 and PG1 - all of which occur in all or some of the canola growing regions of the Prairies,” says Rimmer.

“However, genetic analysis here and elsewhere has identified nine genes for resistance that occur in Brassica napus. These defined genes can be used to develop a more informative system for describing the pathogenicity of populations of the blackleg pathogen in Western Canada.”

As part of the project, Rimmer and colleagues plan to develop canola lines that exhibit each of the nine forms of single gene resistance to blackleg.

“Developing single gene differential lines will provide materials to evaluate more precisely the resistance in new cultivars.”

The Endowment Fund has supported over 200 innovative crop research projects since its inception in 1983. It is administered by WGRF, a farmer-directed organization that represents 18 diverse agricultural organizations in Western Canada.

www.westerngrains.com
Increased P from waterlogged soils

BY LAURA RANCE
FIW staff

Waterlogged soils undergo chemistry changes that can make them prone to releasing elevated levels of phosphorus into surface waters, a University of Manitoba soil chemist told the Manitoba Soil Science Society last week.

Gaza Racsi said changes in the soil pH levels when soil becomes anaerobic (lacking oxygen) could lead to the release of phosphorus in a soluble form. Soil pH drops in alkaline or calcareous soils, which in turns makes minerals such as phosphate and minor elements more mobile.

"The longer the flooding, the more phosphorus will come from that soil into surface water," he said.

That’s an environmental concern, particularly in situations where lighter classes of land are drained and pushed into production of crops that require high applications of potassium such as potatoes or corn — crops which also perform poorly under excessively wet conditions.

Racsi said the risk of nutrient losses due to denitrification and leaching are more pronounced on soils prone to excessively wet conditions.

“We do have lower classes of land which even if we drain that way may not produce consistently good crop yields because we are going to get wetness in those soils more often than in our better class soils,” he said.

“Nitrate can be leached to groundwater or transported to the atmosphere as nitrous oxide, which is a greenhouse gas.”

Dutch farmers, feed makers angry at dioxin incident

BY ANNA MUIDEA

Dutch farmers and feed makers expressed anger on Monday over contamination of feed with the carcinogenic dioxin, saying measures should be taken to prevent such problems that damage the industry’s image.

Hundreds of pig farms, including a handful which also raise chickens, were still quarantined as a result of import bans… and damage to trade is rising rapidly," the main Dutch farmers’ organization LTO said in a statement.

“The damage to our reputation is also considerable. Thus, it is not acceptable for us,” it said.

South Korea banned pork meat from Belgium and the Netherlands, one of the world’s top meat exporters, some two weeks ago when news about the dioxin contamination first broke.

LTO said the existing rules on controlling animal feed were not enough to guarantee their safety and urged the Dutch feed makers association Nevedi to come up with a proposal soon on how to prevent future incidents.

Contaminated feed has triggered several west European food scares such as the discovery of dioxin in Dutch potato animal feed in 2004, an illegal hormone in Dutch pigs in 2002 and a 1999 Belgian scandal of dioxin in chickens.

Authorities have said that the dioxin in the latest incident got into Belgian pork fat ingredients used to make animal feed in October. It was discovered and announced in late January.

Belgian food safety officials have said the contamination was caused by broken filters which led to the use of unfiltered ingredients to extract pig fat from the process of making gelatine at Belgian firm PB Gelatine.

Racsi said those soils would present a lower environmental risk if they are devoted to forestry and crops that can better withstand wet soils. “I put a question mark out there: should we really be draining a lot of these soils particularly trying to make them suitable for crops such as corn or potatoes?”

Racsi said soil tests will do a good job of telling farmers what has happened to their nitrogen availability in the wake of a waterlogged period. But they are less accurate at predicting available phosphorus and minor elements.

“Tests for nitrogen potassium and sulfur give us a good idea of what’s there now and if the soil undergoes a period of wetness,” he said. “Those tests will also tell us what’s left.”

For phosphorus and the minor elements as the soil becomes more aerobic the availability of those nutrients will change and I don’t have much faith that if we took a soil test that it’s going to predict what’s going to happen two weeks from now if the soil gets wet or it gets very dry.”}

Product Update

Everest — new package, renamed supplier

Arysta LifeScience has announced new packaging for additional ease of handling, measuring and mixing Everest herbicide. It now comes in a convenient re-closable 567-gram plastic jug. Each jug treats 50 acres at the 11.5 grams per acre rate, with each case of 10 jugs treating 500 acres at the same rate.

Everest, a post-emergent herbicide for spring wheat, controls multiple flushes of green foxtail and wild oats, and has activity on broadleaf weeds including redroot pigweed, wild mustard, stinkweed, volunteer canola (non-Clearfield varieties) and green smartweed.

Everest is now being marketed under the name of its global parent company, Arysta LifeScience. Arysta, operating in more than 100 countries, previously operated under separate names including Arvesta Corporation, Callippe, Hokko do Brasil and Aryst.

Arysta LifeScience is the world’s largest privately-held crop protection and life science company with 2004 revenues of US$1 billion. www.arystalifescience.com.

Watch next week’s FIW for Yield Manitoba

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Bayer CropScience
Dow AgroSciences
 Commodities boom has yet to run over

BY NIGEL HUNT

The boom in commodities prices still has a ‘good few years to run’ with gold, base metals and many others seeing themselves as those set to climb further, the manager of a new commodity fund said in an interview.

There are great benefits to holding commodities. The bull run began in 2000... and there are a good few years to run on this trend which, the Alternative Investment Strategy Director for RBO Shay Investment Management, said.

The TRF Commodity Plus Fund will invest predominantly in physical commodities and further away from the market in some related equities. There is a uranium story at high prices. The moment and the only way for a market to break an investment is to buy uranium (commodities) shares so what has happened in uranium prices, he said, noting the revival of interest in the precious metal was boosting uranium prices.

Charlesworth said precious metals were also an attractive option for the fund. Gold rose to a new high of $514.50 an ounce to climb to a 19-year peak on Friday. The vein of precious metals I think we have only just seen the beginning,” he said.

Some metals, such as copper were also seen continuing to climb. The metal’s demand linked to industrial development in China and India.

“Something that is going to run and run and run,” he noted.

COBALT and manganese prices have risen sharply over recent months with cobalt futures now at $2,800 a tonne. Copper rose to $2,800 a tonne, and gold to $530 an ounce. Silver, which had been one of the best-performing metals earlier this year, fell to $6.38 an ounce, down 25 cents from its July peak.

Copper and zinc prices on the London Metal Exchange rose to all-time highs on Thursday. Charlesworth also cited sugars as another product area with a good upside potential, boosted by growing demand in emerging markets. The world’s largest exporter is Brazil, which is a major producer. Brazil and India are the two largest producers of sugar in the world, with the rest of the world importing a lot of sugar. The United States is another major producer of sugar, with about 30% of the world’s production.

The new investment has helped lift open interest in CBOET wheat to record levels this week, reaching a high of 10,120 contracts after Tuesday’s close.

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an average of about 600 produc-
but checkoff data says there is
ing their own feed in the winter
corn with yields that can be up
said Jacobson. Silage crops of
competition on forage acres
units. Jacobson says that is the
varieties that need fewer heat
by the BSE-caused losses in the
Left out of program
under the special crops section
price for their production, the
Jacobson says.
moniqué out of Ottawa and it
seed supply pipeline intake has
might not be able to move so the
slower sales have been reluctant
tant to sell at the going rate.
ly in Manitoba, producers are
ducers cutting back on replant-
age seed business, adding to
has led to oversupply in the for-
imported variety doesn’t make
The livestock or hay producer
ascheme called “buying
field, seed from just about any-
der doesn’t fill in the weight
Growers Association. If a pro-
with its accompanying declara-
Research Centre is contin-
wasn’t in the last one either. Nobody is going to get rich on
this thing but our producers just need something to
get their feed prices up, Jacobson said.
The federal exclusion was also
evident on the expert commit-
tees that were set up to relay the
us to Agriculture and Agri-Food
Canada administrators. Forage
seed production was lumped in
import threat
One seed producer and mar-
er wants to see the trade
tighten up due diligence for the
The Canadian Wheat Board
The CWB has committed $300,000 to
support farmers through the
funds research to fight
fusarium in barley

OFFSHORE FORAGE SEED DILUTION CONCERN

THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD (CWB) has committed to support farmers through the
funds research to fight fusarium in barley

19th Annual Field Day

Creating Opportunities
Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba

BY GLEN NICOLL
FNW contributor

I
were thinking of seeding down a field of
annual rye grass for seed
production, you better
have bought the seed and
signed the contract by now said
Leslie Jacobson, president of the
Manitoba Forage Seed
Association (MFSA).

Too many grain farmers
searching for an alternative crop
has led to oversupply in the for-
age seed business, adding to
woes created by the collapse of a
large American seed company
and BSE-stressed livestock
producers cutting back on replant-
ing forage stands.

After a couple of seasons of
poor weather conditions, espe-
cially in Manitoba, producers are
still sitting on some bins of
seeds that they have been reluc-
tant to sell at the going rate.
Companies feeling the pinch of
dilution concern

Farm-to-farmer sales have
been even slowed considerably
by the BSE-erased losses in the
cattle business. The queen of
forages, alfalfa, has lost sales as the
corn breeders come up with
varieties that need fewer heat
units that, Jacobson says, is the
competition on forage acres
said Jacobson. Silage crops of
corn with yields that can be up
to eight times more than that of
alfalfa, or cows that are harvest-
ing their own feed in the winter
as standing corn have cramped
the demand for alfalfa seed he
said.

The number of Manitoba for-
age seed producers fluctuates
with rotations in cropped land
but checkoff data says there is
an average of about 600 produc-
ers.

LEFT OUT OF PROGRAM

Along with the drop in market
price for their production, the
association is fighting for recog-
nition under the federal pro-
gram that was announced as
help for all crop producers.
Jacobson said that forage seed
production isn’t even listed under
the special crops section
that includes soybeans and
canary seed.

“They are saying that forage
seed is excluded because it is
not in there on the original
com-
muniqué out of Ottawa and it
wasn’t in the last one either. Nobody is going to get rich on
this thing but our producers just need something to
get their feed prices up, Jacobson said.
The federal exclusion was also
evident on the expert commit-
tees that were set up to relay the
us to Agriculture and Agri-Food
Canada administrators. Forage
seed production was lumped in
import threat
One seed producer and mar-
er wants to see the trade
tighten up due diligence for the
The Canadian Wheat Board
The CWB has committed $300,000 to
support farmers through the
funds research to fight fusarium in barley

CWB RELEASE

The Canadian Wheat Board has committed $300,000 to
support farmers through the
funds research to fight fusarium in barley

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SOURIS

Date: Thursday, February 16
Time: 9 a.m. – noon
Location: Souris & Glenwood Memorial Complex, Kirkup Lounge
32- 8th Avenue West

SHOAL LAKE

Date: Thursday, February 16
Time: 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Location: Shoal Lake Community Hall
315 The Drive

GLADSTONE

Date: Friday, February 17
Time: 9 a.m. – noon
Location: Gladstone Elks Hall
41 Morris Avenue North

ASHERN

Date: Thursday, March 2
Time: 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Location: Ashern Legion Hall
3 Main Street East

FARMLANDS’ INDEPENDENT WEEKLY
FEBRUARY 9, 2006 • PAGE 19
Counting the real snowbirds

BY DONNA GAMACHE
Freelance writer

I f you have a bird feeder in your backyard and enjoy watching robins, w o o d p e c k e r s a n d cardinals, you might be interested in taking part in the “Great Backyard Bird Count,” scheduled this year for February 17-20.

This is the eighth year of the annual four-day count throughout North America. It started slowly but has been growing steadily, and this year’s count is expected to be bigger than ever. In 2005, over 50,000 checklists were submitted from all across North America, with a total of 613 species sighted. The total bird count was over 6.5 million.

The 2005 Manitoba results included six bald eagles, 10 great horned owls and 213 ravens.

The GBBC operates through the Internet at www.birdsource.org/gbbc/, with birdwatchers e-mailing checklists of the birds they have seen. Those who wish to take part should check this site out in detail beforehand.

Although many submissions are from those watching backyard feeders, the “backyard” title is somewhat of a misnomer, since some people obviously counted birds that aren’t in anyone’s yard. The 2005 Manitoba results included six bald eagles, 10 great horned owls and 213 ravens. But if you want to make your count while walking or driving, you should travel less than one mile.

Birdwatchers may count on one or all four days, using as many different locations as they wish, but they should submit separate records for each day and each location. Counting should be for a minimum of 15 minutes a day, preferably for half an hour or more, but watch-ers should record only the highest number of individual birds that are in view at one time (so that the same birds are not recorded over and over).

Reports may be submitted on each day if desired, and are updated almost as soon as they are submitted. Thus ongoing results can be studied, and a partici-pant’s count will show up shortly after it is sent in. Statistics are shown on charts, as well as both regional and species maps. For instance, type in “Manitoba” and “American robin” and you can learn that in 2005, only one robin was sighted in Manitoba during the count days in the Winnipeg region. In 2004, four robins were counted in the town of Binscarth.

I found the charts listing the localities especially interesting — 210 checklists from Manitoba in 2005, including 62 from Winnipeg, 11 from Portage la Prairie (with 17 species, one of which was a northern cardinal), and one from MacGregor (my submission) with nine species.

For avid birders, there is a lot of information on how to choose binoculars, and how to make or choose a feeder.

If you don’t have access to the Internet in your home, visit a library or an on-line friend. Once you’ve entered your numbers, browse for results. It’s exciting to see your own information added.

Mark February 17th to 20th on your calendar, and let’s really count the birds found in Manitoba. The long mild spell in early winter will probably result in a greater variety than most years. Maybe you’ll be the lucky one to sight a robin or a cardinal at your feeder. On a January 4th CBC radio program, three cardinals and two Carolina wrens were reported in Manitoba, a rare occurrence.

During the first part of January, I counted several American goldfinches, in their winter plumage, at my feeder, and I’m hoping they’re still around for the bird count. Now if only one of those cardinals would also appear.

Donna Gamache lives and writes near MacGregor.

Workers Compensation Board announces funds for farm-related research

Coping with disabilities to be studied

BY LOUISE STEVENSON
FIW staff

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) is funding research into how injured farmers return to work.

Last week the WCB announced grants for several injury prevention projects and research priorities for 2006, including $100,000 to the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies. That research will evaluate existing supports for Manitoba farmers coping with disability. The money comes from WCB’s Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP).

The one-year study will identify barriers farmers experience returning to work, and potential strategies for adapting to disability. WCB is prioritizing this study for its capacity within farm workplaces for farmers returning to work, and to minimize the human and financial impact of these injuries. It can be used as a spokesperson for the WCB.

Dr. Olga Krassioukova-Enns, executive director with the Canadian Centre for Disability Studies, said issues faced by injured farmers returning to work aren’t well understood.

“The farm is not a well-defined workplace,” she said.

Farmers also live where they work. “We’re not just talking about the formal way they can return to work, but how they can return to their lives,” she said.

“Probably there are more complications around their different injuries.”

The research aims to help injured farmers and their families better cope with disability.

Neil Enns, an Elm Creek farmer and president of Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities, said this research will draw out ideas about what supports are needed. A database of tools and other mechanisms used by disabled farmers in their workplaces will also be developed.

MFWD currently has 110 members, but there are no doubt others coping with disability that their organization doesn’t know about. He said he hopes this research will open the door on MFWD’s program.

“We are operating a program all the way from prevention to rehabilitation. We’re there to help,” he said.

The head office of Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities is in Elm Creek; telephone 436-3181, www.fwdmfwd.com

lstevenson@fiwonline.com
**CHORIZO PASTA**

This pasta dish makes a perfect, delicious weeknight meal. It all cooks in one pot and is ready in no time. Serve with an assortment of steamed green vegetables such as broccoli, snow peas and beans.

3/4 lb. chorizo sausage, cut into 1/4 inch thin slices
1 tsp. oil
e 1 onion, chopped
g 1 garlic clove, minced
t 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
1/4 tsp. crushed dried chilies
1 tbsp. cornstarch
c 2 cups frozen peas

1-1/4 oz can diced tomatoes undrained
3 c. pasta
1/4 tsp. salt
1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

Cook sausage in large pot on medium-high for about 5 minutes until brown. Remove sausage and drain on paper towel. Drain any fat from pot. Heat oil in same pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic, seasoning and crushed chilies. Cook for about 5 minutes until onion is softened. In small bowl, combine cornstarch and 1 tbsp of milk. Add to onion mixture along with remaining milk. Stir until well blended. Stir in cornstarch mixture. Stirring occasionally until well combined.

**CREAMY SPINACH AND TURKEY PASTA**

After a long day of errands, chores and catching up, sit down to this simple meal that the whole family will enjoy. It can be substituted for turkey if desired.

3 bacon slices, chopped
1 tbsp. butter
2 boneless, skinless turkey thighs or breasts, cut into thin strips
1/2 c. chopped red onion
c 2 cloves garlic, minced
1 c. sliced red pepper
t 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
2 c. milk
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
1/2 tsp. salt
t 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
4 c. spinach leaves, loosely packed and trimmed
1/2 c. finely grated fresh Parmesan cheese

Cook bacon in large frying pan over medium-high heat for 2 to 3 minutes until crisp. Remove from pan and drain on paper towel. Drain any fat from pan and wipe clean. Heat half of the butter in same frying pan over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook for 5 to 8 minutes stirring occasionally until brown on all sides. Remove from pan and set aside. Heat remaining butter in same frying pan on medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic for about 5 minutes until onion is softened. Add bacon and stir. Stir in flour in small amount water constantly. Remove from heat. Gradually stir in milk. Stir until medium heat for about 5 minutes until mixture thickens and bubbles. Add pepper, salt and nutmeg. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add turkey and simmer for about 5 minutes until turkey is tender, stirring occasionally. Add chopped sneeze and stir until spinach is just wilted. Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of salted boiling water for 12 to 15 minutes until tender but still firm. Drain well. Return pasta to the same pot. Add melted butter, spinach mixture and still to stir. Stir in Parmesan cheese until combined.

**CHICKEN VEGETABLE STEW**

This hearty stew is a complete balanced of all food groups. Complete this meal with fresh greens or whole wheat dinner bread.

2 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
2 medium onions, diced
2 medium carrots, diced
2 red potatoes, diced
1 large green pepper, diced
1-1/4 c. all-purpose flour
2 c. chicken broth
1 tbsp. cornstarch
2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
1 tsp. garlic powder
2 c. water
1/2 c. frozen peas
1 tsp. green onions, chopped

Melt butter in large pot on medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook for about 10 minutes until browned on all sides. Add both onions. Cook for about 5 minutes until onions is softened. Stir in water, broth and seasonings. Cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add potato, carrot and celery. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes until potatoes are tender. Place flour in small bowl. Add 1/4 cup of milk and 1 tsp of flour. Stir until well combined. Slowly add remaining milk until slightly thickened. Stir in peas. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes or until hot. Add garlic for 1 minute. Stir in Parmesan cheese until well combined. Reprint with permission from the Dairy Farmers of Canada

Yield: 4 servings
 nutrient content per serving: energy: 679.2 kcal carbohydrate: 39.9 g · protein: 46.7 g · fat (total): 20.5 g · cholesterol: 170 mg · sodium: 173 mg · calcium: 514.7 mg

**FOOD IN FACT**

To benefit from the calcium in your diet, your body must be able to absorb and use it. In general, the calcium in fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes is not adequately absorbed by the body, the reason is that most of these foods contain factors, such as phytate, oxalate and fibre that bind calcium and interfere with its absorption. Most plant-based foods contain only small amounts of calcium. Dairy foods and some bone fish are very nutritious and can contribute to your overall calcium intake, but it is not advisable to rely solely on these foods for your complete calcium needs. The Osteoporosis Society of Canada recommends that you try to meet your calcium needs first through foods, especially from dairy products, which is the easiest way to absorb calcium.

Source: Dairy Farmers of Manitoba (Calcium/Nutrition)

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**SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN**

To ensure safety in the kitchen, it is important to follow basic food safety guidelines. These include washing hands before and after handling food, storing food at the correct temperature, and ensuring that utensils are clean and sanitized.

**PROGRESS REPORT**

The progress report indicates that the project is on track to meet the planned timeline and budget. It is recommended to continue with the current plan and make minor adjustments as needed to ensure successful completion.

---

**DIETARY INQUIRY**

The dietary inquiry highlights the importance of having a balanced diet to maintain good health. It suggests incorporating a variety of foods from each food group to ensure adequate intake of nutrients.
No. 1 cause of winter injury in Canada

BY LORRAINE STEVENSON  •  FIW staff

Most snowmobile incidents occur in February

Improving water quality in Killarney Lake

BY JEREMY GROENING  •  FIW staff

Riparian areas describe the land running alongside water bodies. The Turtle Mountain Conservation District is encouraging farmers to fence off the riparian areas. This allows the natural vegetation to re-grow along the banks. This vegetation filters out more than 50 per cent of nutrients and pesticides. If the Killarney Lake watershed is improved, then naturally the water flowing into the lake will also be improved.

In spite of all the techniques the KLWQC has undertaken it still believes the most important strategy is public awareness and education. Although all these procedures are in place and they will help the overall water quality of Killarney Lake, there is still a factor that it cannot control — a common species of blue-green algae, known as anabaena, which is capable of incorporating atmospheric nitrogen into its cells. It is not dependent on dissolved nitrogen in soil or water.

The last two summers the water quality of Killarney Lake, Manitoba, was assessed in conjunction with Manitoba Conservation Districts Association's annual meeting in Brandon in December.

Jeremy Groening was one of seven young people who about conservation at the Manitoba Conservation Districts Association's annual meeting in Brandon in December.

Improving water quality in Killarney Lake

Seven students gave speeches on the merits of conservation during the Manitoba Conservation Districts Association's 30th annual meeting in Brandon December 6 and FIW has been publishing them.

It was the summer of 2003. The temperature was 35 Celsius. You made your plans to go swimming at Killarney Beach. As you run towards the water to make your first plunge you suddenly stop in your tracks. The water resembles your Mom’s zucchini soup. You suddenly stop in your tracks. The water resembles your Mom’s zucchini soup.

Beach. As you run towards the water these are some of the courage to set foot into the water moss and friends you would encounter: water these are some of the courage to set foot into the water moss and friends you would encounter.
E-mail classified@fiwonline.com

Please include mailing address, classification and how many weeks you would like your ad to run.

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WESTFIELD 6'X20FT. GRAIN AUGER

VGC, $1,800. 204-

Multi purpose building – would make great shop or tractor storage if the public.

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876-4617.

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$1,600.; 8R Big Beam internal fold, $4,500.

18 1/2 FT. IHC

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Barbeques, free storage and health care

BY MARK WEINBAUER

U.S. agribusiness companies, aiming to ensure a steady flow of grain to their elevators and processing plants, are becoming more creative with incentives they offer farmers.

A health care program from industry giant Cargill Inc. is the latest step up from the barbecue parties, free grain storage and financial planning assistance grain companies have offered farmers to ensure steady supplies of corn, soybeans and wheat.

But farmers can be stubborn customers when prices are not in their favour — holding back grain even when prices are not.

Gray, who operates Gray Farms, drive their decision,” said Ron Gray, who operates Gray Farms in Claremont, Illinois. He farms 1,600 acres of corn and soy.

Cargill AgHorizons, a unit of Minneapolis, Minnesota-based Cargill Inc., upped the ante in January when it offered to help farmers pay for health insurance.

Cargill’s Harvest Health plan will pay farmers up to US$3,450 a year for health care if they plow to sell a certain amount of grain to Cargill.

Cargill said there was no other comparable program for farm families, and that noted health insurance premiums have jumped nearly 60 per cent since 2000.

The proposal has got the attention of other grain companies, which farmers said had begun inviting them to meetings to discuss what a company should offer to ensure a consistent supply of grain.

Perks are just one piece of the puzzle for farmers trying to maximize their profit. By itself, the promise of health insurance probably will not guarantee any sales, but it does pique farmers’ interest.

“Instead of saying incentives go way long, a look at the airlines industry with frequent flyer miles,” said Jim Porterfield, director of special research projects for the American Farm Bureau. “You can do the same thing with health insurance.”

But as important as health insurance is, farmers must balance it with other interests.

Many farmers send their grain to co-operatives they have invested in and in whose success they have a stake.

“The corn is going to follow where their money went,” said Bob Wisner, agricultural economist at Iowa State University.

Some farmers also shy away from long-term commitments to one company, a requirement of Cargill’s health plan.

“In general, farmers are going to be a little bit leery of that,” said John Kuhltus, a farmer in Illinois. He said companies with a guaranteed stream of sales may not bid as high for harvest-crops when it comes time to buy grain.

Farmers also face rising costs on many fronts besides health insurance. For example, the high cost of gasoline deters farmers from hauling grain long distances, no matter what benefits are offered by an elevator or processor.

“This (the health plan) is kind of new and different but you have still got to live within a reasonable distance to a Cargill facility,” Iowa State’s Wisner said.

Cargill’s competitors such as Bunge and Archer Daniels Midland will monitor the success of Cargill’s health insurance plan, but farmers should not expect copypcats programs right away.

Companies already offer smaller incentives.

One grain elevator host a party every other year, and does not require farmers to guarantee future sales as an admission ticket. More than 1,000 guests show up for a day of barbecue and door prizes. It does not add up to the cost of health insurance, but it does give farmers something to bid on.

“This is for free,” said a grain dealer.

Achieving Success

Achieve Liquid is tough on weeds but gentle on a malt barley crop

Malt barley can be a temperamental crop to grow. One of the keys to a successful malt barley crop is to reduce the stress on the plant, allowing it to meet the requirements of malt barley customers.

When growing a high return malt barley crop, growers tend to pay a little extra attention to crop inputs.

Any time a grower can remove the stress on a barley crop, be it from disease or weeds, they can increase their yield, reduce protein and develop more plump kernels.

Achieve Liquid is safe on all varieties of barley. By allowing timing flexibility without compromising safety or effectiveness, Achieve Liquid is an ideal choice for today’s malt barley growers.

Taking it to malt

Malt barley is one of the top two net returning crops, so growers want to make sure they use products that reduce stress to the plant and allow it to develop properly.

“If you injure the crop at any stage, “achieve Liquid is safe and it works,” said Doug Martin, Lunblad, SK

Effective wild oat and grassy weed control is important to yield, quality and consistency. There is no better product to eliminate wild oats than Achieve Liquid. It also has proven effectiveness on a wide spectrum of grassy weeds, including Persian darnel, green foxtail and yellow foxtail.

The 2005 Stratus Agri-Marketing Brand Usage and Image Study confirmed that more growers used Achieve Liquid and Achieve Liquid Gold to protect their barley acres than any other grassy weed herbicide. Trust Achieve Liquid for a crop you’ll be proud of.

in its application feature

U.S. lags Canada with white wheat

BY CAREY GILLAM

U.S. wheat farmers are not growing enough hard white wheat to meet demand, leaving American food companies little choice but to buy from U.S. competitors, a U.S. wheat industry official said February 5.

“We need to really focus on producing it and doing so in targeted areas so we can get critical mass,” said Ron Stoddard, chairman of an industry development committee for hard white wheat.

Stoddard was among a group of farmers, elevator operators and industry officials meeting in San Antonio to discuss industry issues.

He said annual demand for hard white wheat is about 10 million tonnes. U.S. growers were expected to plant an estimated 750,000 acres (383,500 hectares) for 2006, less than the amount needed, wheat experts said.

That is down from 2005 when supermarkets invested more than $12,000,000.

In comparison, rival producer Canada had about 1.2 million acres of hard white wheat planted in 2005, and is expected to double that for the 2006 crop year, Stoddard said.

Australia is also a major competitor for hard white wheat, he said.

Major food companies in the United States have to import hard white wheat because they cannot source enough domestically, Stoddard said.

He said the U.S. industry needs to produce a sufficient volume to assure customers of a consistent supply.

Hard white wheat is typically preferred to hard red wheat for flour and pasta, a trend that continues because it has a sweeter taste and advantageous baking and milling qualities. Given the push by food companies to develop white wheat products, white wheat has been in greater demand.

Always read and follow label directions.
W

End of warm weather in sight

BY DANIEL BEZTE
FIW contributor

We did it; we did it! It’s not too often that we can say that we have beaten an all-time warm weather record, but that is exactly what we did for temperature in January. We did more than that; we beat the all-time record for the warmest November to January. Our three major districts, Dauphin, Brandon and Winnipeg beat every temperature record you can think of in January. Thanks to some of our weather network reporters, and across the country has dropped significantly over the past several years. So the next time you vote think about that — I don’t think a single candidate will have that on their radar screen, but when you think about it, it really is important. Maybe I can convince the government to go private and provide all our FIW weather network reporters with electronic weather stations.

Back to the January that really never was, and then a look ahead at what February might have in store. Will we finally see a return to Old Man Winter or is this a taste of the “climate change” winter to come? Let’s see.

Well, to put things mildly... a bad pun, but really, that is the only word you can use to describe January. If it wasn’t winter you would be saying it's downright hot out there. When I looked at all three of our major stations I was hard-pressed to find more than one day during January that had temperatures near the seasonal average, let alone below average.

Southwest an exception

What about precipitation? Last week I mentioned that all three of our major regions of Manitoba — Winnipeg, Dauphin, and Brandon — had above-normal precipitation so far this winter. I also mentioned that having warm winter temperatures and above-normal precipitation is fairly unusual, since warm winter weather is usually associated with light precipitation.

Thanks to some of our southwesterners, I have been corrected, or rather reminded, that the three regions that I use for talking about weather don’t work for everyone. That’s why we occasionally have to look at precipitation maps to see what is really going on. Although this doesn’t always give us the full story either. This is one of the reasons that we need to switch maps occasionally and look for inconsistencies. For example, looking at the current total precipitation map for southern Manitoba, only the southwest appears to be on the dry side. Areas to the north and west show higher amounts, with values quickly rising to above average. Trusting weather maps and data is a whole different article.

Rating the predictions

And the winner for January is... no one. Everyone, with the exception of the Canadian Farmers Almanac, predicted a warmer than average month, but all three of our main forecasters (Old Farmers Almanac, EC, and FIW) had also predicted below-normal precipitation. If you live in southwestern Manitoba, then they were all right, but overall there was no clear-cut winner, only one clear-cut loser - the Canadian Farmer’s Almanac, which seemed to be calling for bitter cold conditions.

What’s in store for February? Well, I’ll have to admit I probably have a bit of an advantage as the way the publication days work out this year, so we’re already into the month, but oh well, all is fair in love, war, and weather. For February, the Old Farmers Almanac is calling for warmer-than-average temperatures along with well above-average precipitation. Over at FIW, they are leaning towards a continuation of the mild temperatures and dry conditions, but not least, here at FIW, I’m calling for near-normal temperatures and precipitation, with a good chance of at least one good old winter cold snap. Please don’t shoot the messenger!
You know what it takes to get results.

To grow a high-yield wheat crop you need good seed, the right amount of rain and, of course, Horizon®. It’s the best way to get consistently better wild oat and millet control, combined with superior crop safety. That’s probably why Horizon was used on more wheat acres than any other grass herbicide last year.*

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For more information contact our Customer Resource Centre at 1-877-SYNGENTA (1-877-964-3682) or visit us at www.FarmAssist.ca.


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