

SASKATCHEWAN Farmers' Voice

FALL 2017 EDITION



The Official Publication of the
Agricultural Producers Association
of Saskatchewan

MEMBER PROFILE

Kim Keller

*Finding the human element
in technology on the farm*

PLUS:

Youth Leadership
Mentorship Program

Meet the New CGC
Commissioners

Carbon Summit



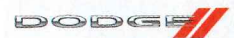


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2018: FCA Fleet Program



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Chrysler Pacifica (Non-Hybrid Models)	\$3,850
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Ram 4500/5500 Cab/Chassis (DPOL**)	\$10,900
Ram 4500/5500 Cab/Chassis (Other)	\$10,900

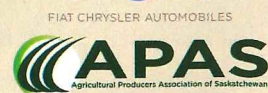


Jeep Wrangler JK	\$4,250
Jeep Wrangler JL	TBD
Jeep Renegade	\$1,200
Jeep Cherokee (Sport)	\$2,250
Jeep Cherokee (Non Sport)	\$3,250
Jeep Grand Cherokee (Excl. SRT & Trailhawk)	\$6,700
Jeep Compass Sport (MP Models)	\$1,750
Jeep Compass Non Sport (MP Models)	\$3,000

www.apas.ca/my-rewards

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*Price incentives based on 2017 models; offers subject to change.



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Kim Keller:

Finding the human element in technology on the farm

BY COLLEEN HENNAN

Kim Keller may have grown up on a farm, but that doesn't mean she always wanted to become a farmer.

"Growing up, I didn't appreciate the farm," she admits. "Looking back now, I am so very thankful that I grew up there and that my parents still farm because that is what has allowed me to come back to it."

However, her return to the farm has included a few side journeys. Along the way, she has found herself immersed in the world of apps, technology and social media. The common thread between these worlds and farming? For Kim, it's community.

She went to the University of Saskatchewan and took Native Studies, intending to follow up with law school. Instead, she got a job at SGI right after graduating and spent the next six years living and working in Saskatoon.

But in 2011, she had what she calls the 'mind shift,' that started her on a path to becoming a third-generation farmer on her family's farm outside Gronlid, Saskatchewan.

"One of my best friends, she farmed with her dad. I watched her and thought 'if she can do it, I bet you I can do it too,'" Kim says.

As she was starting to make her transition into farming, she met her future Farm at Hand partner, Himanshu Singh. He was starting a software development company and he asked her how her family kept track of what was in their bins. When she told him that it was 'a big piece of paper on the kitchen island,' he proposed they build an app for use on her farm. It wasn't long before others were using it on their farms too. >>



“We don’t have a neighbour every mile anymore. You have to build that sense of community somewhere else and someway else.”



The plan had been to farm full-time and work on Farm at Hand part-time, but the app’s rapid growth took Keller to Vancouver, with her parents’ blessing and support.

“They said, ‘the farm will always be here. You have this opportunity that you’ll probably never get again in your life, so you need to run with it,’” she says. She ran with it for the next several years while still helping with seeding and harvest back in Gronlid.

In the Fall of 2014, Kim received a message from a friend that one of her neighbours had committed suicide.

“I remember I was in the grain cart thinking, ‘Why is this happening? Why are we letting farmers get to this point? Why isn’t someone caring? Why isn’t someone doing something?’”

She talked to her partner Himanshu and they came up with the idea of doing a t-shirt campaign through Farm at Hand in the hopes of raising some awareness and maybe a bit of money.

“We thought it would be awesome if we raised \$500,” Kim remembers. They ended up donating more than 10 times that amount to the Farm Stress Line and it would not be the last time Kim helped mobilize the ag community with the help of the internet.

In 2013, frustrated at the lack of a support network for females in the industry, Kim co-founded Women in Ag with her friends Ginelle and Jaclyn Pidwerbesky. It started as a calendar to showcase different women in agriculture and

raise money for Ag in the Classroom but has grown to include a scholarship at the U of S, events and more.

“We have a board and committees,” Kim says proudly. “Our mission is to empower, support and connect women. A strong female voice makes for a much stronger industry. While our primary goal is to promote women in ag, our secondary goal is to promote ag. We want to make this industry bigger and stronger,” Kim says, adding that men are welcome within Women in Ag and encouraged to attend their events.

In addition to her work with Women in Ag, Kim has been farming full-time since the sale of Farm at Hand at the start of 2016. One of the legacies Farm at Hand has left with Kim is an understanding of the power of social media, especially as it relates to farming.

“We don’t have a neighbour every mile anymore. You have to build that sense of community somewhere else and someway else. It’s been a very valuable resource and tool,” she continues. “I’ve met people that are willing to go out of their way to help. If you have questions, they will take the time to help you through that situation and answer your questions. And not only that but also follow up, ‘hey did that work?’”

Then, in June of this year, Kim once again received news of a suicide in the farm community.

“A colleague reached out over Twitter and said, ‘I just lost one of my farmers to suicide. How do I help the family get through this? I think some of my other customers are struggling. How do

I help them? Do you know of anything?’” Kim didn’t know how to respond.

“It took a while to reply because I didn’t know what to say. Really, all I could give them at that time that I knew was the Farm Stress Line. I thought that’s not going to help in this situation. I didn’t sleep very much that night because I was thinking about it. The next day, I just thought ‘I’m just gonna put it out there (on Twitter), I’m just going to ask that we as an industry do something. That we make meaningful change. Because as much as it’s difficult to talk about, farm stress is real and suicide is real.’”

The response Kim received from her tweets was far greater than she expected. She heard from people in Saskatchewan, Canada and the world; from the farm community and countless other industries. People shared their experiences and their struggles.

“It’s almost like, it was just under the surface and all you had to do was brush the dust or dirt away and it was there. It’s almost like we opened the flood gates and no one is willing to close them until someone is willing to do something.”

Kim moderated a panel on mental health just a few weeks later at the APAS midterm meeting. Although in the end, APAS passed a resolution to adopt mental health in the ag industry as an issue to work on, she admits that she wasn’t initially sure how the audience question and answer portion would go.

“When we were done the panel and there were people standing up at the mics and they were kinda the older guys in the room, I was waiting for everyone to tell us to suck it up, but instead we got tears and ‘thank-yous’ and ‘it’s about damn time,’” she marvels. “That’s when I knew that this wasn’t just going to be a topic for a couple of weeks and go away.”

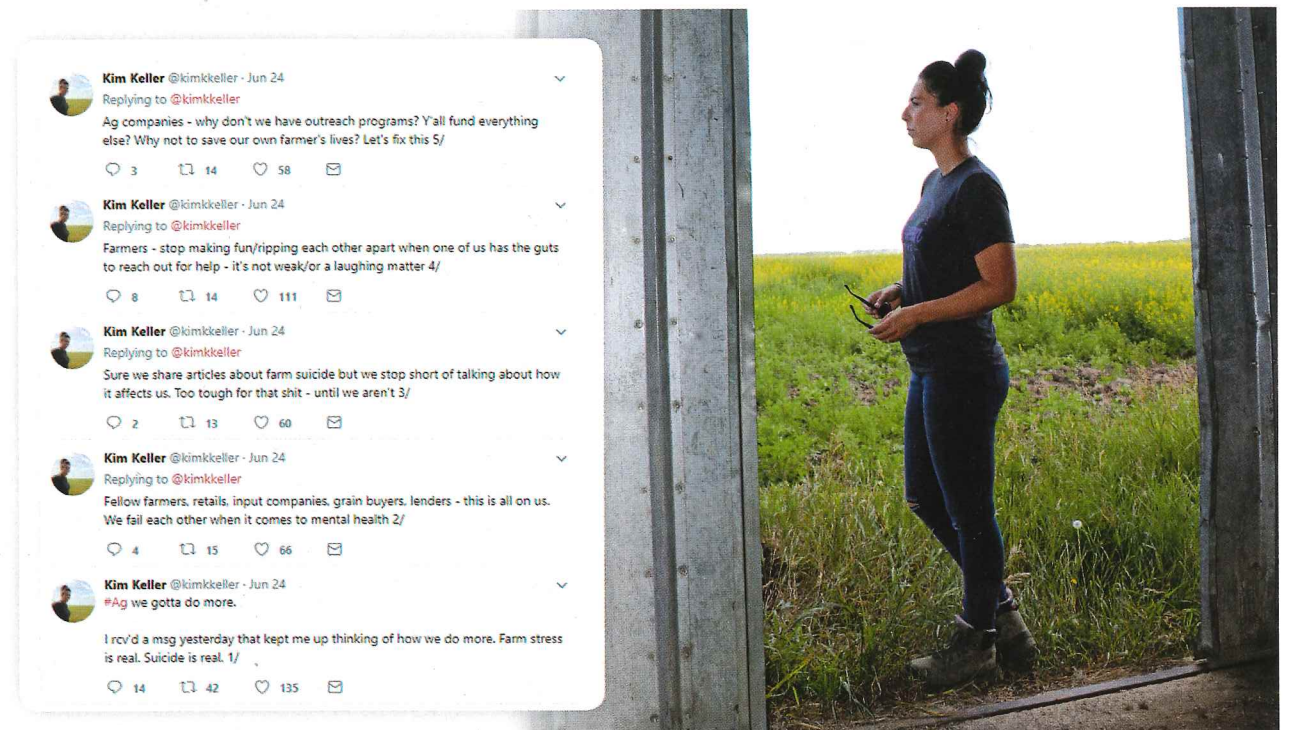
Unfortunately, not every reaction has been as positive. “I’ve gotten a little backlash like, ‘Why aren’t we talking about mental health in all industries?’ My response is,” she continues, “if I tried to do some of the stuff we’re doing right now across all industries, I would throw up my hands and say ‘it can’t be done.’ I’m starting in my own backyard. I’m starting with me. There is no reason that agriculture can’t lead other industries in the area of mental health. This is a chance for ag to shine and to lead.”

Kim shies away from ownership of the mental health conversation, insisting that the time was right for someone to finally say something, on a platform where everyone was listening.

“This isn’t my movement or my topic, this concerns everyone,” Kim insists. “What I’m seeing is a lot of people picking up the torch and running with it in their own way, and I think that’s what we all have to start doing. Figuring out how we talk about it to move it forward so we can reach other people that we wouldn’t reach otherwise.”

Reaching people that we wouldn’t reach otherwise has become a skill of Kim Keller’s, it seems. As excited as Kim is about the community-building aspects of today’s technology and what it could mean to the farm industry, she knows that at the end of the day, you can’t build a community without people.

“The farm is a perfect mix of low tech and high tech and you need it all. You can’t just have pen and paper and you can’t just have a bunch of apps. You need to use everything,” she says, adding “there is and will always be such a strong human element to farming, and the strength of relationships.” **FV**



Mental health resources

Where to find help in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Farm Stress Line: 1-800-667-4442
Available 24/7. Free and confidential. There is no call display. Operated by Mobile Crisis Services out of Regina.

Healthline: 811

Staffed by licensed health care professionals 24 hours a day and free of charge. HealthLine's registered psychiatric nurses and social workers can offer crisis counseling and strategies to help you manage your situation or give you information about resources in your community.

University of Regina – Free Online Therapy Unit

Free Online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for depression, anxiety, and/or pain; available to residents of Saskatchewan only.

Apply at www.onlinetherapyuser.ca
For more information: 306-337-3331 or email Online.Therapy.User@uregina.ca

To find a psychologist near you: www.psychsask.ca

Regional Crisis Lines and Support Centres

Not every centre provides the same level of service, however all listed maintain a crisis line that anyone can call for support, usually 24/7.

West Central Crisis & Family Support Centre (Kindersley): 306-933-6200 (24/7)

South West Crisis Services (Swift Current): 306-778-3386 (24/7)

Hudson Bay & District Crisis Centre: 1-866-865-7274 (24/7)

Prince Albert Mobile Crisis Unit: 306-764-1011 (24/7)

Regina Mobile Crisis Unit Suicide Helpline: 306-525-5333 (24/7)

Saskatoon Mobile Crisis: 306-933-6200 (24/7)

Five Hills Health Region Mental Health and Addictions Services Crisis Line: 1-877-564-0543 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

Canadian Mental Health Association The CMHA has branches in Estevan, the Battlefords, Kindersley, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Swift Current, and Weyburn. CMHA Saskatchewan also has a Systems Navigator that will help direct you to the most appropriate health services to meet your needs. She can be contacted at angelicabarth@gmail.com

Mental Health First Aid and other training

Everyone knows that someone who is choking, having a heart attack or experiencing another physical health emergency requires first aid until professional help arrives. This same concept can be applied to mental health as well. Mental Health First Aid was developed to help people provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Road to Mental Readiness — Canadian Mental Health Commission

Contact Mike Slater at m Slater@moosejawems.ca

Bridges Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace Mental Health First Aid Certification Training: www.bridgeshealth.com

ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)

ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. Find the next course in your area at www.livingworks.net/training-and-trainers/find-a-training-workshop/



Achieving federal goals for growth in agriculture requires better consultation and better policy

BY TODD LEWIS, APAS PRESIDENT

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT has outlined some very ambitious targets for growth in agriculture and the food sector in both exports and processing. While no one in agriculture will argue with lofty targets, our federal decision makers need to ensure that their policy framework actually creates the environment for Canada's farm families to continue to invest for the future. Recently we have seen two important federal developments that could have major long-term impacts on the future of agriculture in Canada.

SMALL BUSINESS CORPORATION INCOME TAX

On July 17, the Federal Finance minister announced consultations on changes to the Income Tax act that would affect incorporated small businesses, including 25 per cent of Saskatchewan farms. The deadline for the consultation was set for October 2. Right in the middle of the harvest season.

The Government's stated intent behind these proposals is to eliminate tax avoidance by the wealthy. However, tax specialists have been quick to point out that the proposed changes could have serious consequences on incorporated family farm operations.

Canada's income tax system is very complex, and the small business corporation provisions have been in place since 1972. Over time, many small businesses have organized their business structures around these rules as part of long term business planning. While the Federal Government has stated that their intention is not to impact farms, the time period for consultation is much too short to ensure that that is not the outcome.

It is important to understand that the vast majority (98 per cent) of farms are

still owned and operated by families. Incorporation has been an important tool for many families in organizing the transfer of farms between generations. These structures have been set up to allow younger family members to gradually increase their ownership of farm assets, while allowing the older generation to secure their retirement.

Proposed rule changes could create a situation where the sale of farm assets to a non-family member could have a considerably lower tax rate than the transfer of the farm to a family member. Obviously that would have a serious impact on the future of agriculture.

“Let your MP know of your concerns and how these changes will affect your family farm.”

Capital gains rules could also have major consequences for the tax implications of retired farmers selling their land. Other rules could impact the ability of farms to save money for future investments or to carry them through financial difficulties.

As soon as the potential consequences of the tax proposals were raised by the accounting profession, APAS wrote to Federal Minister Morneau highlighting these concerns. We have continued to push back against these proposals at the provincial level, we have contacted Saskatchewan MP's and informed the media of the potential effects of these changes. Nationally, through the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, we have lobbied hard in Ottawa. These proposed changes are being seen as even more far reaching

than initially thought as more analysis comes forward. Let your MP know of your concerns and how these changes will affect your family farm.

BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT — BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

Farming is a high-risk business, and Canadian governments have always worked to share the risk with farmers through business risk management programs like Crop Insurance and income stabilization programs.

In July, Federal and Provincial Ministers of agriculture finalized an agreement on the next five year agriculture Policy Framework, the Canadian agricultural Partnership. At the request of Canada's agricultural organizations, the future of business risk management programs including Crop Insurance, Agri-Stability and AgriInvest will be the subject of a one year review period.

Saskatchewan producers have steadily withdrawn from the Agri-Stability program. Enrolment rates have never been lower and continue to fall. Simply tinkering and adjusting the limits does not fix the unpredictable and unbankable nature of the program. This review period is an opportunity to ensure that we have more predictable and effective programs going forward, because the present model is not working. Larger numbers are enrolling in Crop Insurance, it is important that it continues and that improvements to coverage continue as well.

All programs need to be assessed to ensure both producers and government are getting the best value for their money. There is limited amount of funding available. Let's make sure we are investing in the most effective risk management and the continued success of our industry. *fv*

Cultivating the next generation of Saskatchewan's farm leaders

BY COLLEEN HENNAN

THE NUMBER OF Canadian farmers under the age of 35 is up for the first time since 1991, according to the latest census numbers.

Although that same survey also revealed that the average age of key operators on the farm edged up slightly to 55, it is proof that there is a healthy cohort of young farmers coming up behind the Boomers who will be needed to increasingly assume leadership roles in the ag industry over the next few years.

But what supports are available to help the next generation of farm leaders prepare for the responsibilities on the horizon?

That's where the APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship program comes in.

The program is small, accepting only five participants each year. It is all expenses paid thanks to funding from the Saskatchewan government through Growing Forward 2. This will be the fourth year that the program has paired up its participants with experienced Saskatchewan farm leaders in a mentor/mentee relationship.

During the nine-month program, participants learn how to chair meetings, polish their presentation skills and identify and advance the farm issues that matter to them most. The program is also meant to be an opportunity for mentees to meet and network with other producers of all ages.

Program participants get the chance to attend the APAS AGM in November and travel to Ottawa for the CFA's AGM in February. While there, mentees get to meet and talk ag with provincial and federal ministers and leaders, which former program mentee Spencer Maxwell found to be an eye-opening experience.

"You always hear about Ottawa and the legislation coming out of there, but



The 2017 APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship program mentees in Ottawa at the CFA AGM. From left to right: Steven Donald, Scott Owens, Jasmine Dreger, Kim Keller, Trewett Chaplin.

through this program, I gained first hand experience in meeting government representatives and learned about the inner workings involved with lobbying government," he said.

"Above all," Maxwell continued, "hearing stories from producers just like you from all around the country and issues they face really broadens your horizon and makes you realize you aren't fighting alone."

Although his experience in the program has shown him how incremental change in policy can be, Maxwell says that it has also impressed upon him the necessity of the work and he recommends the program.

"Ag policy can be intimidating and the sooner our generation gets involved and learns how to navigate the ag policy world in the province and in our country, the greater chance we have to continue to push producer rights and issues in the future as the torches get passed on to us."

The APAS Youth Leadership and Mentorship program is open to active producers who own land in an APAS member RM and are between the ages of 18 and 39. The deadline to apply for the program is October 31, 2017. For more information, contact Don Ross at dross@apas.ca. **FV**

APAS activities

See what APAS is doing for all Saskatchewan farmers

VOICING CONCERNS WITH FEDERAL CARBON PRICE BACKSTOP POLICY

► In May, Environment and Climate Change Canada issued a paper outlining the carbon pricing policy that would be imposed on jurisdictions that don't have one in place by 2018. In June, APAS formally responded to the proposed "backstop" policy by strongly opposing its implementation on Saskatchewan's agricultural producers.

The carbon backstop policy proposes fuel levies that range from two to three cents per litre for diesel and gasoline, rising to 13 and 15 cents per litre by 2022. A similar rate schedule is proposed for gaseous fossil fuels, such as natural gas. Power companies would also face higher costs due to surcharges on coal and/or participation in "output" based cap and trade markets.

In responding to the proposed backstop policy, the APAS submission raises concerns over the economic harm and the impact on competitiveness these levies would have on primary producers who are export dependent and unable to pass along increased costs to consumers. Although the policy promises a fuel exemption for on-farm use, the APAS submission counters that surcharges on farm fuel represent a minor portion compared to the indirect costs borne through higher input bills and lower commodity prices, as suppliers and buyers adjust prices to offset higher operating costs. The APAS submission also highlights the environmental gains the sector has realized through investments in technological innovation and improved farming practices, including zero-till farming and increased feed efficiency in cattle.

Producers already have strong incentives to reduce emissions and stay competitive, which is why carbon taxes

don't work for agriculture. APAS will continue to make this case and oppose the imposition of federal carbon pricing schemes on Saskatchewan's agriculture industry.

APAS MIDTERM MEETING

► APAS held a one-day midterm meeting in Saskatoon on July 13 in conjunction with the Prairie Agricultural Carbon Summit. The midterm included reports from the President, General Manager and an update on recent policy activities. The meeting concluded with a panel discussion on farm stress and mental health in agriculture with panelists from Bridges Health, FCC, APAS President Todd Lewis, and Danny Ottenbreit, a young farmer and the APAS representative for the RM of Grayson. The panel was moderated by Kim Keller, a producer from Gronlid and participant in the 2017 Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program. Following the panel discussion, representatives passed an emergent resolution calling on APAS to develop a plan for furthering the promotion of mental health awareness and support resources among Saskatchewan agricultural producers and rural communities. APAS resolutions are normally presented and debated during the Annual General Meeting, which takes place in Regina from November 28 to 30.

THE CFA SUMMER BOARD MEETING AND INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

► Members of the APAS Executive team were in St. John's, Newfoundland to attend the Canadian Federation of Agriculture's summer board meeting and annual Industry-Government Roundtable. The annual event brings together farm leaders to discuss national priorities for the sector, and includes a joint session with Canada's

federal, provincial and territorial Agriculture Ministers.

The agenda for this year's event included the federal government's growth targets for agriculture, the development of a National Food Strategy, the next Agricultural Policy Framework, and the North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations.

AG IN MOTION

► APAS hosted a booth at the Ag in Motion trade show in Langham in July. In addition to chatting with attendees about who we are and what we do, we also asked producers to list their top three current sources of stress. See page 19 for the outcomes of some of those conversations about mental health and agriculture.

LOOKING FORWARD TO A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF BRM PROGRAMS

► While in St. John's, federal and provincial Ministers announced the signing of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a multilateral, \$3 Billion funding agreement set to replace Growing Forward 2 in April 2018.

The CAP agreement maintains funding levels for non-business risk management strategic initiatives, which include programming in areas such as research, market development, and the environment. For business risk management (BRM) programs, the CAP agreement includes an adjustment in the Agri-Stability reference margin, which is meant to minimize the impact that margin limits were having on farm types with lower allowable cost structures. To offset the additional costs associated with the change to Agri-Stability, governments have reduced the cap on AgriInvest contributions from \$15,000 to \$10,000. >>

The announcement on CAP also included a commitment from governments to conduct a comprehensive review of business risk management programs. The review commences this fall, and findings will be reported at the Ministers meeting in July 2018.

APAS has been a leading voice calling for this review, and will continue to participate in this process on behalf of Saskatchewan producers. Longstanding concerns with Agri-Stability and successive cuts to AgriInvest demonstrate a need for governments and industry to step back and fully examine whether the existing business risk management programs are sufficiently addressing the risks that producers face in today's operating environment.

GRAIN BAG RECYCLING

▶ APAS recently attended a briefing session hosted by the Ministry of Environment in which officials announced next steps on a new, cost-recovery recycling program for plastic grain bags. Starting in 2018, the program will increase the number of grain bag deposit locations around the province. The new program will be funded by point of sale levies on new grain bags. The increased use of grain bags in Saskatchewan has presented an environmental challenge that APAS has been working to address for many years. Please stay tuned for more information about new grain bag recycling opportunities as they become available in your local area.

CALLING FOR A MORATORIUM ON THE CLOSURE OF PRODUCER CAR LOADING SITES

▶ APAS has responded to a recent decision by CP rail to close 10 producer car loading sites in the province by calling on the federal government to impose a moratorium on these and future site closures until a costing review is completed. If the closures go ahead, Saskatchewan will be left with 26 loading sites on CP rail lines, down from 75 in 2005. Since the Maximum

Revenue Entitlement program is based on out-dated costs, Canadian railways are compensated for maintaining the same number of sites that existed in 1992. In requesting the moratorium, APAS also asked the Minister of the Transport and the Standing Committee on Transport to ensure the new transportation legislation contains stronger legislative protections for public loading sites in rural Saskatchewan. Under the existing provisions, railways can close public loading sites in rural areas after 30 days of providing notice in a local paper. The discontinuance process for urban sidings is more rigorous, requiring notification to provincial and municipal authorities in addition to a 12 month consultation process.

FEDERAL TAX CHANGES

▶ APAS is speaking out against the federal government's proposed tax measures for private corporations. The proposal contains major changes to the way assets, dividends and capital gains are taxed when transferred between family members. Given that the clear majority (93 per cent) of incorporated farms are family businesses, the proposed changes could have serious and negative impacts on family farm succession plans that have been developed for the long term.

In August, APAS initiated an ad campaign calling on Saskatchewan producers to get involved by contacting their MP and/or signing a petition opposing the proposed changes. APAS also wrote to the Federal Minister of Finance, Saskatchewan MPs, and the Standing Committee on Finance highlighting initial concerns and requesting the withdrawal of the proposal until more time and consideration can go into such transformative changes. APAS has been working with other provincial and national farm organizations, including the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, to further analyze the details of the proposal and coordinate lobbying efforts against these changes.



PRODUCER COALITION SUBMISSION TO TRANSPORT STANDING COMMITTEE

▶ The Saskatchewan Producer Coalition submitted a brief to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, which held special hearings from September 11 to 14 to study Bill C49, the Transportation Modernization Act. The Producer Coalition, consisting of APAS, Sask Wheat and Sask Barley, has been working together on grain transportation issues since the government announced a review of transportation legislation in 2014.

Although Bill C49 is a positive step towards greater commercial accountability in the grain handling and transportation system, the legislation is silent on several considerations of importance to agricultural producers. These include a railway costing review to ensure fair compensation and informed decision-making when it comes to rate issues, better capacity planning on the part of all stakeholders, and stronger discontinuance processes for public loading sites and grain dependent branchlines. Service for small shippers, including producer car shippers, were also raised in the Coalition's brief to the Standing Committee. On September 12, Norm Hall, who is currently a Vice President of both APAS and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, appeared before the Standing Committee in Ottawa to present on behalf of the CFA. Thanks to Norm for taking the time during harvest to discuss an issue of great significance to Saskatchewan producers. *fv*

Meet your new CGC commissioners

Get to know Patti Miller, Doug Chorney and Lonny McKague

BY DELANEY SEIFERLING WITH FILES FROM JACQUIE NICHOLSON

Patti Miller

When Patti Miller took over as Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission in February, she inherited a daunting to-do list.

There were staff to meet, stakeholders to consult with, and user fees that needed reviewing and recalculating. Then there was the matter of the \$107 million operating surplus that had built up over the last few years, and figuring out how to allocate that money in keeping with the CGC's mandate and the industry's wishes.

It was an ambitious agenda but Miller was well-equipped to take it on, bringing to the table a wealth of experience in several areas of the industry. She most recently served for five years as president of the Canola Council of Canada, and prior to that managed program delivery at Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. She has also worked as communications manager for a Winnipeg based multinational agri-food company.

Miller grew up a city kid but both sets of grandparents farmed near Sylvania, Saskatchewan, where she spent many of her weekends and summers. When it came time to choose a career path, she says there was no question she would go into agriculture.

Miller says her experience at the Canola Council, an industry association that includes the entire value chain, prepared her in many ways for her new role at the CGC.

"There was a wide range of issues to deal with there," she says. "You'd be dealing with the agronomy team, talking about investments in agronomy projects, working on market and trade



Patti Miller, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission. PHOTO: CGC

access issues, and working in other policy areas."

Miller says her first half year at the helm of the CGC has been a balancing act in showing leadership while also learning from others' perspectives.

One of her first exercises in listening was the CGC's recent industry discussion on its fee surplus. By spring of 2017 the Commission found itself with an operating surplus of \$107.2 million and climbing, largely the result of user fees set back in 2013 when the government removed the majority of the agency's funding and ordered it to become financially self-sufficient. The new fees were calculated on a historical 15-year

average of exports. With the high-production years that followed, this turned out to be an underestimation.

Some farmers and producer groups have lobbied for the surplus to be returned directly to producers, but Miller says that within the Canada Grain Act regulations, there is no mechanism for the organization to refund the money.

"The other complicating fact is those fees are charged to producers through the grain companies, so we don't actually know which producers have paid which amounts," she says. "So logistically, even if we had the authority within the Act, it would be very complicated and very expensive."

Instead, the CGC reached out to the industry in a 60-day discussion period this spring. It put forward several ideas for ways to spend the surplus, as well as inviting suggestions.

In the meantime, new user fees came into effect on August 1. They have been reduced by 24 per cent and have been implemented eight months before the end of the five year fee cycle, which stops the surplus from continuing to accumulate.

It has been a busy and challenging first six months for Miller at the CGC, but she has always thrived in fast-paced and varied work environments and she wouldn't have it any other way.

"It's quite interesting because when people think of regulatory organizations it doesn't always inspire," Miller laughs. "But the people here are so committed to the industry, and that is lovely to see. It's been just great getting to know them and seeing the talent and the dedication." >>

Doug Chorney

Doug Chorney has an extensive history of working with farm organizations in Western Canada.

That experience has been helpful so far in his duties as Assistant Chief Commissioner for the CGC, a role which he took over in February.

For example, one of the files that he holds near and dear is that of producer payment security and the CGC's licensing system.

"When serving as KAP President, I had the unfortunate experience of working on behalf of producers to help them when they weren't getting paid for grain that was delivered," he says. "This is an area where there are a lot of things done well but there's also lots of opportunity for improvement."

Chorney's background in full-time agriculture spans more than two decades. He grew up on a family farm in Manitoba and after pursuing an education in agricultural engineering and working in the resource and aerospace sectors, he decided to start farming full-time in 1993, taking over a 1,500-acre operation in East Selkirk, Manitoba.

At the time, he had a newborn baby girl and his aging dad was not well and he felt the career change would afford him more family time. Although it was not a great period for farming, due to low commodity prices and bad weather, he is happy with his decision.

"It was a life choice to change my focus towards family and in hindsight it worked out to be a good thing," he says.

Over time his farm prospered, producing grains, oilseeds, cereals and also fresh produce that was sold directly to consumers.

During that same period, Chorney was inspired to get involved with Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP), a Manitoba farm policy



Doug Chorney, Assistant Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission. PHOTO: CGC

"They really went to bat for the people in our community and the issue we were working on and I was so impressed by that I got more involved."

organization, because of an issue within his local community.

"I reached out to KAP, thinking that as one of their members, they can help me," he says. "They really went to bat for the people in our community and the issue we were working on and I was so impressed by that I got more involved."

That involvement included stints with several other related organizations, including the Manitoba Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Manitoba Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health, the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, and more.

"I really liked this work," Doug says. "I felt that I was making a contribution." He also eventually became the president of KAP, a role which he served in from 2011 to 2015.

After that Doug was approached by farm leaders in the agriculture community about considering submitting his application for a position with the CGC. He was officially named to his current role earlier this year, and remains intrigued by the new opportunity and particularly by the technological capabilities of the organization, given his background in engineering.

Specifically, he is impressed with the scope and capacity of the CGC's Grain Research Laboratory, which focuses on crop and technology research.

"All the research done there on the functionality of grain and how it performs for customers and all the issues that go along with that are very interesting to me," he says.

"The researchers are not just doing work for Canadian farmers but they're also leading world-renowned research including developing testing methods for cereal chemistry and demonstrating end use functionality which other countries look to Canada for leadership on."

Lonny McKague

After spending the past 61 years on a farm in southern Saskatchewan, working in an office in downtown Winnipeg is a big change for Lonny McKague.

He admits he went through an adjustment period when he began his new role as Commissioner of the CGC in February.

"It was a challenge for me to change my lifestyle and have more of a fixed schedule in an office compared to the flexibility I had on the farm," he says. But it's also been a life change he is enjoying.

"I love this job. I come to work every day and I'm smiling when I get to work in the morning. The staff and the employees of the CGC are a very professional group and world-class in their abilities."

Lonny and the other new members of the CGC team spent the first six months on the job becoming familiar with the current issues that the CGC is dealing with.

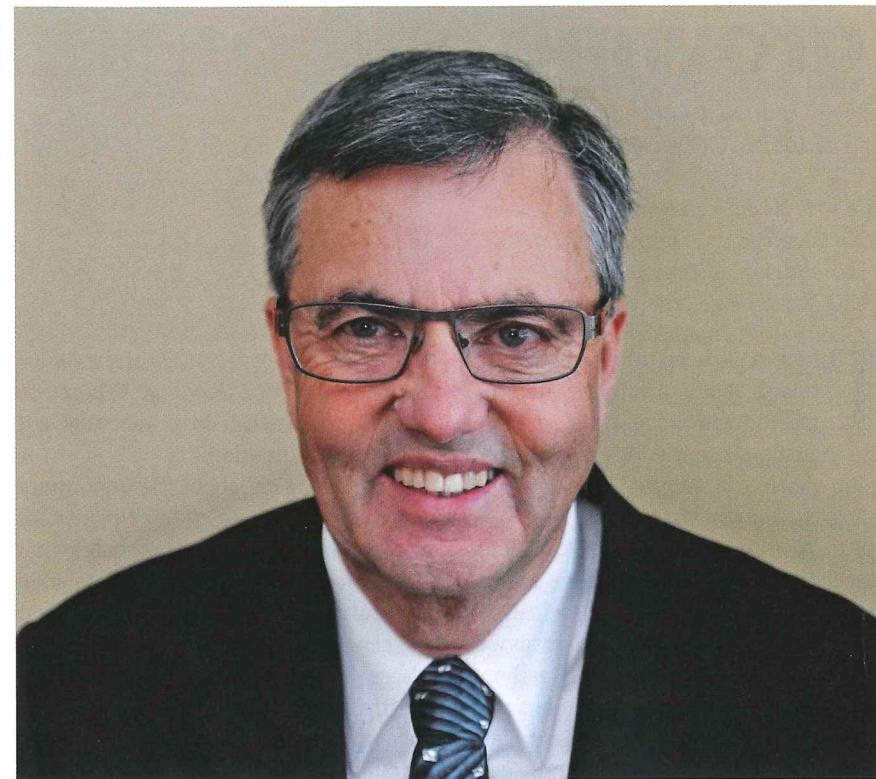
"We're unique in the fact that the three Commissioners all started on the same day, so we're all trying to stay involved with as many issues as possible right now simply because we want to learn about the organization, its structure and value, and areas we're not familiar with," he says.

The Commissioners are also able to focus in on issues that are of particular interest to them based on their previous experience and interests within the agriculture sector. And Lonny has many.

After growing up on the family farm in Ogema, Saskatchewan, he and his wife went on to establish their own mixed farm and commercial greenhouse operation in the same area, which they still own and farm.

During this time, he was also busy raising a family with his wife and volunteering with a wide variety of local and provincial sports, community and farm organizations, including the Ogema Agricultural Society, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, the Ogema Credit Union, and many more.

"In rural Saskatchewan, everyone did a



Lonny McKague, Commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission. PHOTO: CGC

lot of volunteering," he says. "That's the only way a small community survives."

He also gained an interesting perspective of the Canadian grain handling system about 20 years ago when he and three other farmers negotiated the purchase of part of a local rail line that Canadian Pacific was going to abandon.

"In shipping producer cars, it was very evident to me the value of the CGC and the role they played in protecting farmers and some of the farm interests, especially in the producer car segment but also in the elevators," he says. "I learned to deal with the CGC firsthand and to appreciate the value they were contributing back to me."

Another interesting experience that has helped shape him for his current role was volunteering with the Canadian Limousin Association, for which he judged cattle shows within Canada, showed and sold cattle in North America and sold cattle embryos worldwide.

Lonny also participated in an industry led trade mission to China in 1994 to promote Canadian livestock genetics.

"By being able to get out and see some of the world and the trade, those experiences help set the stage for the position that I'm in today. Those experiences were valuable in recognizing how large and also how small the world is at the same time."

And while he will use all this past experience to focus in on the areas of the CGC's operations that are most important to Western Canadian farmers, he will also use his new role as a platform to communicate back to farmers the important work the CGC is doing for them worldwide.

"I try to relay the value I see in the CGC to farmers and Canadians and communicate its role in enhancing and maintaining the Canadian brand around the world," he says. "That's one of my goals I come to work with every day."

Prairie producers are key to growing carbon sustainability

Western Canadian experts are optimistic about what farmers and ranchers can achieve in managing carbon on the landscape

BY DELANEY SEIFERLING

There have been a lot of concerns raised about a potential carbon tax for Saskatchewan's agriculture industry since the Federal Government signed on to the Paris climate change agreement last year.

But at the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan's Carbon Summit in July, a new tone was added to the discussion — one of optimism about how producers are sequestering carbon on cropland and pasture, and about the exciting role that agriculture might play in being a solution to the greenhouse gas emissions.

"Agriculture and forestry will play a big part in mitigating climate change," said keynote speaker Maurice Moloney,

Executive Director and CEO of the Global Institute for Food Security. "There are many things we can do to intervene and improve the situation."

Moloney talked about the importance of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to all planet life and referred to scientific research that has shown that the 14 per cent increase in CO₂ between 1982 and 2010 led to a 15-20 per cent increase in green foliage cover in warm, arid environments. He also referred to research that linked the increase in CO₂ to an increase in greening throughout the global vegetated area.

Moloney also pointed out that farmers can play a significant role in helping balance global carbon supplies, through best management practices (BMPs)

such as no-till agriculture, maintaining nutrient and water-efficient crops, sequestering more biomass in the soil, and more. He cited research that showed that Canadian cropland can store or sequester as much as 22 million tonnes of atmospheric CO₂ a year by using BMPs such as zero-till practices. The same research further estimated that grazing land can store another 3 million tonnes of CO₂ through improved gas production and proper grazing management.

"Canada is a special case," Moloney said. "It's a low population, it's a high CO₂-fixing entity as a political entity, and we are probably already... net positive and therefore sequestering carbon

for colleague countries around the world."

"We can do better but the fact of the matter is, we should not underestimate the contribution that Canada uniquely makes to the carbon economy."

Another positive that came up throughout the summit was that Saskatchewan is far ahead of other provinces and countries in adopting and measuring sustainable farming practices. More than 20 years ago, Brian McConkey, Research Scientist at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, began the Prairie Soil Carbon Balance (PSCB) project, which tested the levels of soil organic carbon (SOC) in Saskatchewan fields.

SOC is generally considered the best single indicator of soil quality. Overall the research found that SOC is increasing on Saskatchewan farmland under direct seeding, and the changes have been greater than expected — information that is extremely important for claims of environmental impact, said John Bennett, a farmer and past Director and Chair of the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association.

"Most people don't realize how fortunate we are and the foresight that went into this PSCB project many years



Maurice Moloney, Executive Director and CEO of the Global Institute for Food Security.

ago. It's absolutely world-class research," he said.

The next phase of the PSCB research, which will begin next spring, will be extremely important to show the 20-25 year cyclical impact, Bennett says. It will also help us answer questions such as if we're at our limit and if we are able to exceed our goals. This type of information will be critical in making future decisions around carbon taxes and credits, Bennett said.

"The thing that's given us currency and the reason we've been successful in

lobbying for carbon sinks is because as farmers we have the PBCS project and we have the data so we can bring that to the table."

"One thing I've learned from the plethora of boards I've been on is, whoever brings the information to the table brings the decision, so you better have the info you need."

Another positive for Canada is that we are far ahead when it comes to sustainable farming practices, compared to other countries, said Drew Black, Director of Environment and Science Policy at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

According to Black, Canadian farmers are already amongst the most efficient in the world and the lowest carbon emitters. For example, between 2005-2014 Canadian emissions dropped four per cent.

These advanced practices have benefited us financially, according to University of Saskatchewan (U of S) Professional Research Associate Cecil Nagy. By adopting zero-till (or minimal till) practices, the Canadian prairies have enjoyed \$23.4 billion in onsite benefits and \$1 billion in offsite benefits. Of those benefits, 50 per cent have been captured by farmers in terms of fuel, labour, equipment, and other cost savings and productivity gains, Nagy said. >>



Left to right: Michael Raine, Managing Editor of the Western Producer; Stuart Smyth, Assistant Professor of Agriculture and Resource Economics at the University of Saskatchewan; Leon Kochian, Canada Excellence Research Chair and Associate Director of the Global Institute for Food Security.



Left to Right: Richard Gray, Tristan Skolrud and Cecil Nagy from the department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Saskatchewan.



Left to Right: Ben Voss from Morris Industries Ltd and Karen Haugen-Kozyra from Viresco Solutions Inc.

Nagy also said that Canadian farmers have huge advantages, when compared to 27 other countries including most of Saskatchewan's competitors, in terms of our access to precision agriculture, big data, robotics, and better management practices.

Despite that optimistic outlook, there was much talk of the work that still needs to be done.

Some of the challenges still ahead will be determining how early adopters of sustainable practices might be recognized for their early efforts and how to document sustainability in a way that is easy and efficient enough for farmers to adopt into their day-to-day practices.

Many people are already working on solutions.

Ben Voss, the President of Morris Industries Ltd., said that his company is always focused on how their equipment can help farmers improve carbon efficiency through channels such as more efficient fertilizer placement, improved input management, and data collection.

"Sustainability needs to be documented so it can be proven," he said.

Another consideration will be how Canada can invest in the innovation and

"I think there's a tremendous benefit behind the potential of science to deliver these technologies to agriculture over the next decade..."

biotechnology needed to support producers to adapt to climate change and build resilience.

Some of this research is also already underway, said Stuart Smythe, Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the U of S. He reported that recent research has demonstrated potential to create plants with the ability to sequester carbon by 20-40 per cent through some of the newer genetically modified breeding techniques.

"I think there's a tremendous benefit behind the potential of science to deliver these technologies to agriculture over the next decade," he said.

"The real question is going to be, will the politics of biotechnology allow these technologies to reach you and your fields."

Overall, however, the summit was an important reminder that Western Canada is already well positioned on this issue, said APAS President Todd Lewis as he summed up the summit.

"One real takeaway from today is that we've got a research community based in Western Canada that really is world class," he said. "In situations like this, if we didn't have research, if we didn't have these people working for us, we'd be in a really bad position to fight the fight we have in front of us."

Lewis also reminded attendees of the importance of the industry coming together to address the issues that are important to agriculture.

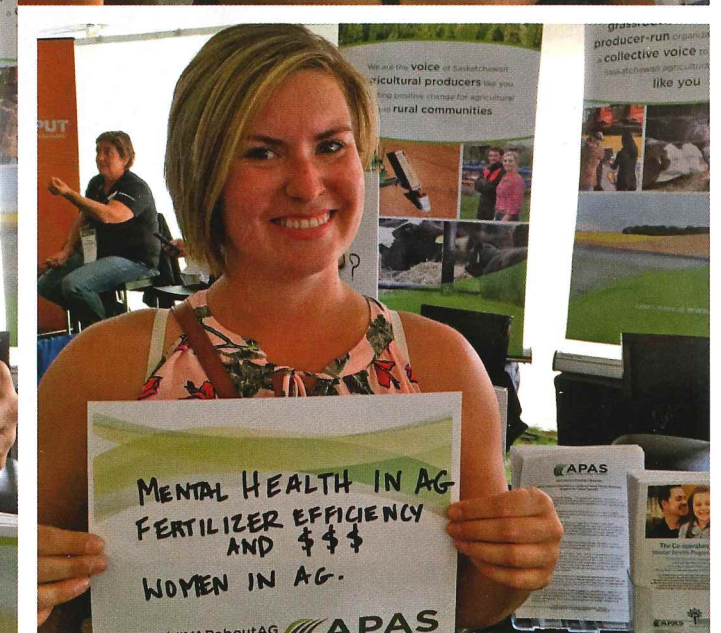
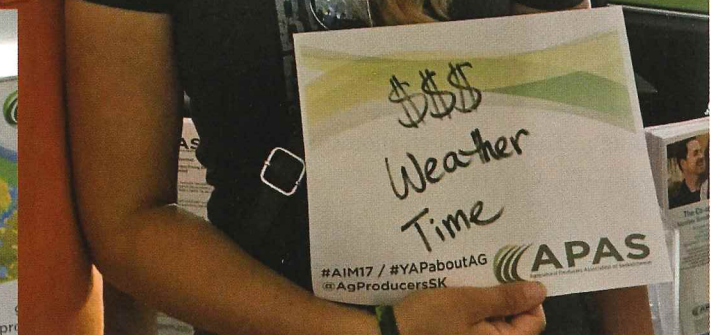
"As an industry, we have to work together. Everybody needs to go in the same direction here — if we have one voice we're going to have a lot more success in trying to affect the policy in this issue."

For access to all the Carbon Summit presentations and videos, visit www.apascarbonsummit.com. **FV**

Talking Farm Stress at Ag in Motion 2017

BY COLLEEN HENNAN

APAS was at Ag in Motion in Langham in July. Members of the Young APAS Producers (YAP) committee engaged attendees on the topic of stress and mental health in agriculture by asking them to list the top three ag issues that they are currently most concerned about. Responses were posted on social media with the hashtag #YAPaboutAG in the hopes of starting a conversation about farm stress.



New safety app aims to save lives, strengthen emergency response in rural areas

SUPPLIED BY STARS

CANADIANS NOW HAVE access to a new level of personal emergency assistance and peace of mind, backed by an organization known for its expertise in finding and caring for critically ill and injured patients.

STARS has just released SOLUS™, a smartphone app that enables individuals to request and receive 24/7 emergency assistance anywhere in Canada where a cell signal can be received.

SOLUS tracks the user's location in real time and in an emergency situation will connect him or her with an emergency communications specialist in the STARS Emergency Link Centre. STARS will then notify the user's predefined emergency contacts and will co-ordinate the appropriate level of response within minutes.

Although STARS has been monitoring registered sites and lone workers for more than two decades, this is the first time the non-profit is offering its services in a product designed for individuals.

"We had people asking us for a personal version of the safety and monitoring services we offer larger businesses, so we've harnessed those services and put them in the palm of your hand," said STARS' Director of Business Development, Erin Sharp.

"Our goal for this app is the same as always: to help someone on what is likely their worst day, possibly saving their life. Leveraging our knowledge and resources in a new way to provide a convenient safety tool for people is a natural extension of our regular operations."

The app is suitable for anybody who works, travels or plays alone in rural or dangerous environments, where medical assistance may be far away and difficult to connect with. Those who work in agriculture, the resource sectors and professionals who are frequently on the



"Our goal for this app is the same as always: to help someone on what is likely their worst day, possibly saving their life."

road will find it as useful as casual motorists and recreationalists will.

Other apps exist to monitor individuals on a subscription basis, but SOLUS is uniquely positioned because of its integration with STARS' Emergency Link Centre, said Karen Walker, Emergency Communications Specialist.

An innovative feature of the service is STARS' Neighbour Helping Neighbour safety network — a voluntary database of farmers, lone workers, industry medics and first responders that populates STARS' emergency mapping soft-

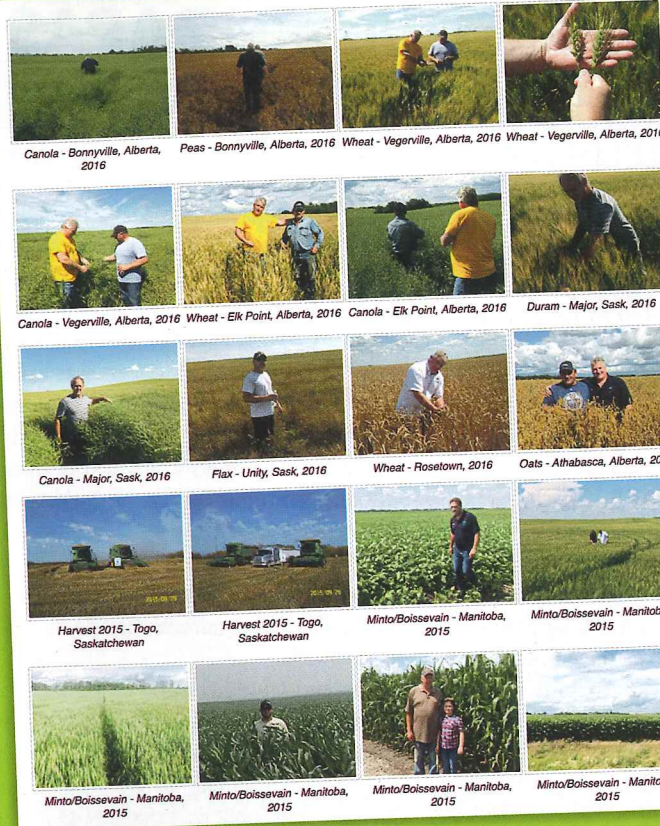
ware. These local individuals can potentially be called to a patient's side as a first line of assistance during an emergency while medical personnel are en route. SOLUS users are encouraged, though not required, to enroll in the program.

"As we expand our Neighbour Helping Neighbour safety network with SOLUS, I'm particularly excited about how we can use it to strengthen the rural emergency response system," said Walker.

For more information, visit solus.ca. FV

PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY STARS

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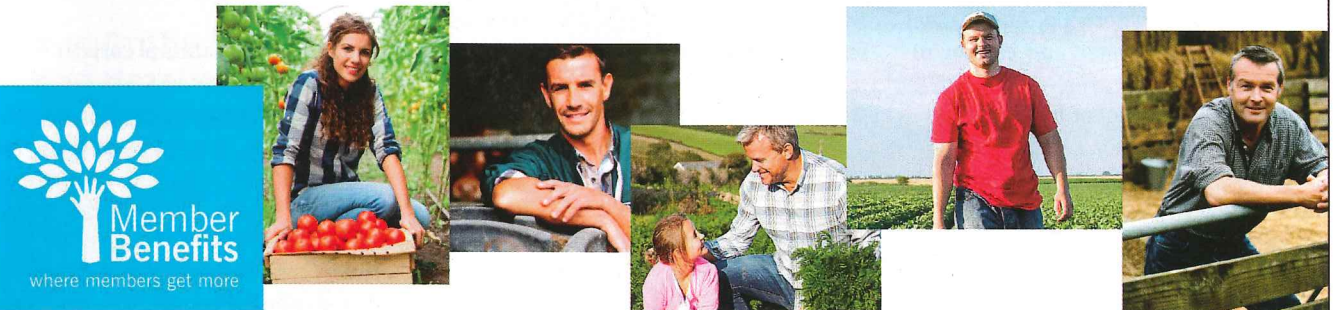
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Lessons learned from the 2017 APAS Prairie Agricultural Carbon Summit

BY DUANE HAAVE, APAS GENERAL MANAGER

THE APAS PRAIRIE Agriculture Carbon Summit brought together agricultural producers, researchers, government policy makers and other members of society to explore and discuss the role that agricultural practices currently play in the greenhouse gas balance, and the exciting potential that new research and technologies can provide. This was the first conference of its kind to be held by an agricultural producer-run organization.

APAS organized the Prairie Agricultural Carbon Summit to ensure that the voice of producers and researchers are heard loudly and clearly in the discussion on carbon policy. We wanted to make sure that the enormous problem-solving potential of agriculture is understood by everyone. Because that's what farmers and ranchers do every day; manage soil and water and carbon to produce food.

There has been a lot of focus and controversy about Canada's carbon pricing initiatives. However, the discussion has often overlooked the importance of agricultural land management as a strategic tool in managing carbon. It is very clear that carbon pricing itself doesn't work in agriculture, because there is no way for producers to pass their extra costs through the value chain. There is no "market signal." Because of this, agricultural producers already have very strong incentives to look for any possible efficiency.

In addition, carbon pricing will not be sufficient for Canada to achieve its carbon emissions reduction commitments by itself. We also need to look at other tools like carbon sequestration. Fortunately, agriculture has the capacity to deliver on that gap.

The world needs to reduce or offset greenhouse gas emissions while also

producing 70 per cent more food by 2050 to meet growing demand. Both missions are achievable, as we learned at the Carbon Summit, given the right tools and the right policies.

SUMMIT TAKEAWAYS

1. Agriculture has great potential to solve the Greenhouse Gas problem

International researchers have calculated that if all the world's agricultural producers were able to increase the sequestration of carbon in soils by four parts per thousand, we can help halt the increase in atmospheric carbon. We would also help increase soil productivity. All it takes is some bold thinking. As one presenter pointed out, we removed a billion tonnes of carbon from prairie soils when we cultivated them, why don't we find a way to put that carbon back?

2. Food comes first

The International Panel for Climate Change agrees that greenhouse gas emissions policies must not present potential disincentives to producing food the world needs. The goal of feeding the world comes first.

3. Canadian Agriculture is producing more while emitting less

From 1991 to 2012 Canadian agriculture produced 25 per cent more in crops while producing 15 per cent less GHG emissions resulting in an improvement in emission intensity of over 30 per cent. These improvements include both crop and livestock sectors, and there is more potential with better technology.

4. A greater understanding of agriculture is needed by policy makers

Governments and policy makers need to understand that carbon emissions poli-

cies must not place a financial burden on an industry like agriculture that can't pass along increased taxes, but could respond well to incentives. Environment Ministries need to develop a better understanding of how agriculture operates and how policy can be designed with incentives to reach key goals.

5. Carbon offset policy has to recognize the constant change in agriculture

Agricultural practices and crop rotations are constantly changing, and each year brings a new set of production challenges and financial and market risks. Carbon offset policies must be flexible in their design to recognize these dynamic conditions and allow for future change.

6. Protecting agricultural carbon sinks is paramount

The Paris Agreement recognizes the importance of the conservation and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases. Uncultivated grasslands in Western Canada currently hold between two to three billion tonnes of carbon to a depth of one metre and must be protected through incentives to prevent further loss.

7. Investing in agriculture benefits all Canadians

Investment in zero-tillage research and development have provided a 60:1 benefit to cost ratio without taking into account the value of the ecological goods and services it has provided to society. The sequestration from zero-till is just the beginning of what is possible. Agricultural research can lead to potentially huge advancements in carbon sequestration by increasing plant root mass, plant yield, and increased photosynthe-

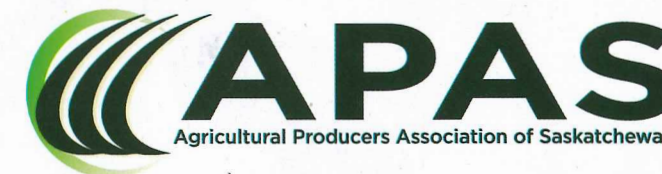
sis. Funding must also be allocated to projects working to help quantify sequestration in soils, which will increase the measurability of offsets. This will help to build a solid offset system that can provide incentive to producers. Agriculture worldwide would also benefit from research on how to design offset programs that are effective in promoting enhanced carbon sequestration and preservation of carbon sinks.

APAS is very excited to play our part in this ongoing discussion, and we look forward to building partnerships and momentum with agricultural organizations and researchers to work on this major initiative. The APAS Prairie Agricultural Carbon Summit Report is available at www.apas.ca. *FV*



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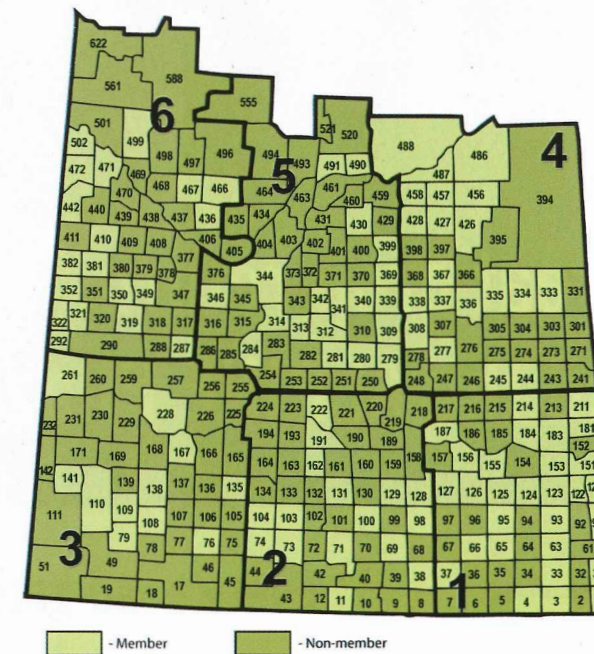
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