

POTATO MINUTE



April 1, 2014

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The start of April is here and it's still winter across Alberta. Although the two week forecast is for double digits of positive temperatures, it has been a long winter. Snow came early in the North, long before the ground had the opportunity to freeze, and has stayed white all winter. Without the ground being frozen there becomes the great possibility of volunteers being a concern for the upcoming growing season, just one more thing that growers will have to be aware of this spring and summer. The South on the other hand did not have a lot of snow cover for most of the winter, but there was many a night that the temperature dropped to -40°C, driving the frost down to levels that had not been experienced for years. There was more than one account of frozen waterlines going to homes and shops.

March 3rd to 6th, a number of PGA growers, along with Deb, Jeremy and I, had the opportunity to attend the Canadian Horticulture Council's AGM in Kelowna, BC. Kelowna, as well, was still in the throngs of a long winter, with snow still on the ground and ice on the pond. Along with the AGM there was a number of side meetings, including CPC, UPGC, Seed Potato Sub Committee, CFIA

and Regional Caucus meetings. The message out of the entire four days was one of discontent, frustration and concern for, not only the Potato Industry, but the entire Horticultural Industry in Canada. CFIA, AAFC and the Canadian Government continue to make changes that directly affect growers and producers across Canada without consultation or input from stakeholders, with their livelihood and ability to make a living directly affected by these decisions and changes. We continue to lobby the Government to consider the outcome of these changes before it destroys the basic fabric of the horticultural industry in Canada, including our potato industry. We cannot continue to bear the downloading of services onto the backs of Growers.

On a positive note, Alberta is well represented with John Bareman being elected as CPC Chairman, Ernie Van Boom is on the Executive Board as the Prairie Representative for CHC and Gord Visser is the Seed Potato Sub Committee Vice Chairman.

Negotiations across North America continue in earnest, with Washington and Idaho now having processing contracts in place for the upcoming growing season. Your

Negotiation Committee continues to work on Alberta's contracts, with two contracts having been settled and talks are ongoing with our third processor. Many hours and days are spent working on this very integral part of growing process potatoes in Alberta. The rest of Canada does not have contracts at this time, although talks are continuing.

Our Seed Industry continues to soldier on, with seed shipments being slow at best, with the implementation of the new Shipping Point Inspection requirements and the SPTQMP being in jeopardy. One thing that is never in question is the resolve of the Growers in this sector of our Industry. No matter what is thrown at them, the determination and 'never say quit' attitude is a true testament to the spirit of our Seed Growers.

As we await the coming of spring, I would like to wish everyone a safe and uneventful planting season. We all need to remember that the most important part of this industry is our family and employees. Everyone need to go home at night and be safe and sound with their family.

Happy planting!!!!!!!

Until next month. Terence

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2013 Upcoming Events

- ◆ April 9-13th
-Aggie Days Stampede Park -Calgary
- ◆ April 28 & 29th
- Aggie Days Exhibition Park - Lethbridge
- ◆ July 9th - APIA Burgers, Beans & Beer - Taber Legion Park
- July 10th- PGA Golf Tournament, Paradise Canyon Golf Resort, Lethbridge
- November 18 - 20th, 2014 Alberta Potato Conference, Deerfoot Inn & Casino, Calgary, AB

From Deb Hart ~ Seed Coordinator



92nd Annual General Meeting

Growing a Healthy Organization

UPDATE

Congratulations to the following for being nominated to CHC positions:

Ernie Van Boom - Prairie Representative on the CHC Executive Committee

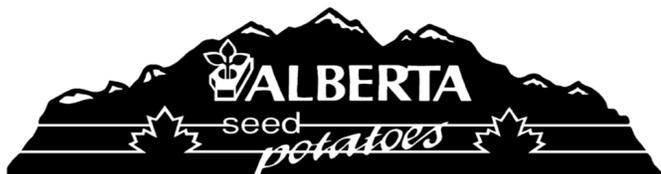
John Bareman - Chairman of the Canadian Potato Council

Gord Visser - Vice-Chair, Seed Potato Sub-Committee

Terence Hochstein - Potato

Representative, Science Advisory Committee

These gentlemen are volunteering their time to represent, not only the industry in Alberta, but Canada. For Ernie's position as Prairie Rep, he represents all horticulture in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. This is a great honour for Alberta! Please support them in their efforts to represent our industry at the National level.



Potato Cyst Nematode Sampling

Please note that any lots grown in 2014 destined, or potentially destined, to the US must be PCN tested. The 2014 crop will be sampled in the fall this year, however you must still notify CFIA when making your application for inspection. The cost per sample will be \$100.



Shipping Point Inspections

Just a reminder that any load destined to the US for commercial or recertification **must** have a shipping point inspection performed by CFIA. To assist with scheduling, prevent delays in shipping to your customers, or incurring overtime, please contact your regional office ASAP to schedule the inspection.

Also, all Seed Growers shipping domestically must be registered and using the Seed Potato Tuber Quality Inspection Program as of **April 1, 2014**. If you have not been contacted by CFIA to register for the program, please contact your regional office immediately.

Congratulations Dr. Howard on Your Retirement



The Potato Growers of Alberta salute Dr. Ron Howard for his 39 years of dedicated service with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. We commend you on your contributions to the Potato Industry and Agriculture in general.



We wish you and your wife a long and happy retirement!!

From Jeremy Carter – Technical Director

It's funny how different professions measure things. In auto racing, the acceleration of a race car is measured from 0-60 mph, how many seconds it takes to get from dead stop to a standard speed. This process is refined with painstaking precision, mechanics working to squeeze every last bit of torque out of a high performance engine. With the close of my second winter in Southern Alberta, I have come to realize that the planting season is measured in a similar fashion, though the unit of measure is different. Tractors, cultivators and planters are in the shop receiving their final mechanical checks in anticipation of long days in the field. With farming it is slightly confused, tractor performance is measured with two different sets of units and highly scientific; -20 degrees to full out planting! I believe last year it was only a few days. It will be interesting to see how that transpires over the next few weeks.

As usual the technical desk has been busy. **Water is the theme of the month!** Most recently spending an afternoon with the Taber Irrigation District and ARD's irrigation team discussing water quality, and water quality parameters. We will be actively involved as a new initiative is set out at the TID to monitor water quality and establish triggers and limits on water quality parameters. The focus of the study will be on run-off; however, the interesting component of this project that is of real interest is what may be in irrigation water that could pose a threat to the potato crop. All that said, the Provincial Government studies to date show our irrigation water to be of very high quality, let's hope it stays that way over the long term.



Following up from last month, the **BRR protocol for ASB Fieldmen** is through it's first major draft revision. I am happy with the way this is shaping up, the protocol and the interaction with the different ASB that we have been working with. They are engaged in the process in a positive sense. It is hoped the protocol will be ratified this month, and ready to go for the coming season.

On the Late Blight front, this past month I have been out working the non-commercial crop with an information blitz. On visiting with all the major nurseries in Lethbridge, as well as presenting at a Hutterite Colony Gardeners meeting, it is very apparent that Late Blight was a major issue last year. In fact it's a bit alarming to hear that tomatoes were devastated across Southern Alberta this past summer. On a good

note, everyone is sitting up and paying attention. Both the Colonies and the Garden Centers are hungry for the information we've prepared. Over 4,000 PGA produced brochures on Late Blight have already gone out to nurseries, garden centers and potato seed distributors already. Awareness efforts will continue over the next few months.

Finally, if you missed the first session of the **Late Blight Speaker Series**, the videos have been released to you on YouTube. None of us should assume that we already know enough, or that "someone else is going to look after that for me". This is a major disease that can cost us millions of dollars. It is up to each and every individual who grows or works in our industry to get educated regarding Late Blight. **Links to these videos are available on the PGA website. Click on the YouTube logo at the top of the home page, and look for Late Blight Speaker Series which will show four videos from the different presenters in that collection.**



Have a rapid and safe planting season. I am looking forward to getting my boots dirty as you head out to the field and start the season. ~ Jeremy

POTATO PUFFS

3 cups of mashed potatoes
2 eggs
1 heaping cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan
2 tablespoons chopped chives or parsley
Salt & Pepper



Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease with butter 8 - 9 of the wells of a non stick muffin pan. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk the eggs, then mix in the sour cream. Stir in both cheeses and the chives. Add potatoes and mix well. Spoon them into the pan filling the cups to slightly below the top. Bake 25 - 35 minutes until they pull away from the sides of the cup and are golden brown. Remove from oven and let them cool 5 minutes in the pan. Serve with sour cream if desired.



From the Office

March has been meeting month at the PGA. Thank you for everyone who attended **PGA's AREA MEETINGS** held in the middle of the month, and **UNITED POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA'S POTATO PARTNER'S SEMINAR** on the 25th. This was a well attended event, and thank you again to **Rocky Mountain Equipment** for their sponsorship. Besides these meetings, numerous pesticide courses were held at the office, and lets not forget negotiation talks! In addition, the PGA Team made time in their busy month to promote the PGA to smaller area farmers, as well as work to enhance the future of the organization. Read more below.

Strategic Planning

Every successful business has a strategic plan that contains a Mission Statement, a set of goals, values and the strategic initiative on how to maintain that vision. In 2007, the Board and Management team of the day created a strategic plan that the PGA has operated under ever since. Over the years, there have been some minor changes to that plan.



In 2013, our current management team felt that it was time to formally update and revamp what was previously established. In order to meet the current needs and direction that the Board and grower members of the PGA have indicated, our team applied to Growing Forward II and was able to obtain a 3 to 1 matching grant to hire a professional consultant to facilitate this process. Mr. George Virtue CA, Managing Partner of YPM Chartered Accountants was hired to work with the Board and our team to create a relevant and updated strategic plan. This plan will not only provide us with direction for the current year, but also provide us with some direction and vision as to where our



organization can and will be three to five years down the road. Step 2 of a 3 part process is now complete and, once finalized, we will share the new plan with all of our members.

Vegetable & Small Fruit Grower's Seminar

Every year in March our Hutterite community holds a Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers meeting in Lethbridge put on by Dr. Paul Regan. This year the PGA (Terence, Jeremy and Cindy) had been invited to provide some information to those in attendance – 128 colonies with over 300 people from across Alberta and SW Saskatchewan – on what the PGA was all about; the benefits of becoming a member, a brief overview of Late Blight and its devastating effect that it had on many of their gardens. There were many questions asked and we have since gained a few new members to our Grower family. I feel that it was a day well spent reaching out to our community in an effort to help put a stop to the spread of late blight in Alberta. **Terence Hochstein ~ Executive Director**



2014 Scholarship Applications...

are on the PGA Website under the **Growers Only** section, "**Services/Programs & Forms**. Please complete and submit the downloaded form if you plan on applying for the Scholarship this year. Ensure that if you are chosen to receive the \$1000 scholarship that **YOU follow up** and submit the information requested in your "congratulations" letter from the PGA! We may only issue you the funds if you provide the necessary proof of acceptance to a Post Secondary Institution and your successful completion of the first semester. **No reminder letters will be sent**, so please ensure that you follow up accordingly.



2014 License Applications ...

will be sent out in April for all **Producers**. The mail out will include your license information and the invoice for your fees. Please ensure that if there are any changes to your address, contact information or contact people, that you fill in this information and return it to our office by fax, mail or email. License fees will remain at **\$50.00 FOR ALL LICENSES**, which are **due by June 30th!**

We ask that you to get your license in place before you head in the fields. We are also sending out **Packer/Dealer, Processor** and **Greenhouse/Laboratory Licenses**. **PGA Industry Associate** licenses are now handled through the APIA, but this membership still allows you access to our website, invites to our Area Meetings, and more.



WE ACCEPT ONLINE PAYMENTS THROUGH THESE BANKS...

Also please remember first installments for **Seed & Table Levies** were due **March 15th**. Pay early to avoid late fees!!

Idaho Survey Shows Increase in Potato Consumption

Idaho Potato Commission Conducts National Survey to Celebrate Potato Lover's Month. The survey was conducted between Jan 7th and February 3rd among 1,000 nationally representative Americans over 18 years of age using an email invitation and an online survey.

And the survey says...we live in a tater nation! In a new survey by the [Idaho Potato Commission](#) (IPC), 97% of Americans said they eat potatoes and more than 81% enjoy them as a side dish, snack or main course on average of three days per week.

"The Idaho Potato Commission's marketing programs have one main objective – to increase Idaho® potato consumption nationwide," explained Frank Muir, President and CEO, IPC. "We were thrilled with the survey results, which found consumer attitudes toward potatoes shifting. America's favorite vegetable is now consumed three times a week, up from two times per week in 2009!"

Other "eye-opening" survey results:

Tater Nation

- 97% of Americans eat potatoes.
- Over four in five (81%) sit down with a plate of potatoes once a week.
- More men than women (84% vs. 78%) eat potatoes once a week.
- Midwesterners are more likely than those in other regions of the country to eat potatoes at least once a week (88% vs. 78%).

Popular Preparations

Americans like convenience and it's evident in their favorite ways to eat potatoes.

- Baked (29%)
- Mashed (25%)
- French fries (17%)
- Hash browns (9%)
- Potato chips (5%)
- Baked potatoes are favored more by those who are 45+ than by 18-44 year-olds (36% vs. 23%).
- More 18-44 year olds than those who are 45+ prefer French fries (21% vs. 12%).

Cravings

When asked which vegetable you crave most, potatoes were the clear winner.

Nearly one quarter (24%) of the Americans chose spuds, followed by leafy greens such as lettuce, kale or spinach (20%), broccoli (14%), tomatoes (13%) or corn (11%)



Source: EAGLE, Idaho, March 3, 2014 - PR Newswire

April 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>April Fool's Day</i> (try not and get fired)	2 <i>Love Your Producer Manager Day</i>	3 <i>Don't Go To Work Unless Its FUN Day</i>	4 <i>Walk to Work Day</i>	5 <i>International Pillow Fight Day</i>
April 1 - 7th ~~~~~LAUGH AT WORK WEEK ~~~~~LAUGH AT WORK WEEK ~~~						
6	7	8 <i>Be Kind To A Lawyer Day</i>	9	10	11 <i>Wear Your Pajamas to Work</i>	12 <i>Walk on Your Wild Side Day</i>
~~~~LAUGH AT WORK WEEK~~~		PGA at AGGIE DAYS in CALGARY April 9 - 13th ~~~PGA at Aggie Days				
13 In Calgary	14 <i>International Moment of Laughter Day</i>	15	16 <i>Stress Awareness Day</i>	17 <i>Blah! Blah! Blah! Day OR Get to Know Your Customer Day</i>	18 <b>GOOD FRIDAY</b> <i>PGA Office Closed</i>	19
	21 <i>Easter Monday Office Open</i>	22	23 <i>Admin Professional Day</i>	24 <i>Take Our Daughters &amp; Sons To Work Day</i>	25 <i>Hug a Plumber Day</i>	26
27	28	29 <i>International Dance Day</i>	30 <b>Storage Reports Due</b>			
PGA at AGGIE DAYS in LETHBRIDGE						

## Job Opportunity

The Crop Extension Branch, Alberta Rural Development is currently recruiting for a

### Field Crop Business Development Agrologist

Various Locations Job ID: 1022811

Closing Date: 04/13/2014

To view and/or apply for this job, make the appropriate selection below:

<https://www.jobs.alberta.ca/jobs-dynamic.html>

**Life is not all about work.** Deb Hart has again provided some fun suggestions on what you can do daily, to help you enjoy the month of April.

The PGA Team will be out and about speaking to the public at both **Calgary and Lethbridge Aggie Days** about ALBERTA POTATOES, and we hope you will stop by our booth if you are at either of these events. ALSO, the call will be out for us to showcase your spuds, so if you can provide us a sample for our display, please give Cindy a call.



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