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Trudy Kelly Forsythe

Mother Nature has not been kind to farmers in the west, and this week's FCC Express brings you stories on the impact weather conditions are having on fall harvests. There are also stories from the Outdoor Farm Show, challenges facing soy farmers, exciting news for the cranberry sector, and more.

Keep watching for those exciting changes coming soon to FCC Express. You'll get more news in a variety of formats, more outlooks across a broader reach of topics -- and from additional experts -- and more stories that will help you dive further into agricultural topics.

Your comments, questions and story ideas are always welcome. You can contact Allison at allison@finnamore.ca or follow her on Twitter, [@A_Finnamore](https://twitter.com/A_Finnamore).

1. Saskatchewan faces harvest challenges

by Neil Billinger

Saskatchewan farmers can expect a challenging harvest with unstable weather conditions.

It is in sharp contrast with the last couple of years which featured plenty of September sunshine.

"We have probably pushed the envelope as far we can," says Drew Lerner, an agricultural meteorologist with World Weather Inc. "In Canada, you can't get too many years in a row of harvest seasons like that."

September has brought extensive rain and colder than normal temperatures, pushing harvest further behind normal.

Saskatchewan Agriculture's weekly crop report indicates only 14 per cent of the provincial crop had been combined as of Monday. Another 39 per cent was swathed or ready to straight-cut. That compares to the five-year average of 26 per cent combined and 32 per cent swathed or ready to straight-cut.

"The combines have not been going," says Wayne Bacon, a farmer in the Kinistino area in the north-central part of the province. "We can't seem to get it dry enough to start."

Southern Saskatchewan has received a lot of rain as well, downgrading pulse and cereal crops. Early lentil samples are showing some bleaching and wrinkling and the additional moisture is not improving the condition of the crop.

"There will be more number two and three wheat than we have seen in the past number of years," says Bruce Burnett, CWB crops and weather specialist. "I think we are going to produce a crop that will be mostly number three or four durum."

Frost will also create quality downgrades for late seeded crops. The mercury dipped below zero over many areas of the province early Wednesday and Thursday morning last week.

"Many of the guys here have late cereal crops," says David Marit, who farms in the Willow Bunch area in south-central Saskatchewan. "I think if we could have got by for the next week or two without a frost, it would have pulled everything through."

The harvest is shaping up to be a long, drawn out affair with growers having to combine as much as possible during what could be narrow windows of good weather.

2. Video: Rick Hansen's powerful message to ag

FCC

Rick Hansen's Inspiration for Canadian Ag

Rick Hansen shares his powerful message for the ag industry, talks about his friendship with Terry Fox and if he'd trade the life he's lived for the use of his legs.

[Watch more videos on our multimedia page](#)

3. Unseasonable weather stalls Prairie farmers

by Richard Kamchen

Harvest conditions in Alberta and Manitoba have been hit hard by unseasonable weather conditions. A sudden snowfall earlier this week ended summer overnight in Alberta, and cool, wet conditions stalled Manitoba's fieldwork.

While news outlets highlighted Calgarians sliding on roads and coping with power outages, for farmers, the most significant element of the sudden weather turn is the reduced temperatures.

"The thing that's maybe the most concerning is not so much the snow as the cold weather and the effect that it might have on crops that may not have been mature yet," says James Wright, risk analyst with the province's Agriculture Financial Services Corp. Temperatures in northern Alberta reached as low as -6°C, Wright says.

Although crop development in southern Alberta is further along, unseasonably cold weather could be harmful to crops like sugar beets, beans and grain corn.

Even prior to the snow, Alberta's harvest was hindered by inclement weather. Ever since around the third week of August, conditions became much cooler and wetter, Wright says.

"It didn't really matter where you were, you'd get a few nice days and get some harvesting done, and then you'd end up with either showers or a light rain to shut you down for a few days before you could get going again," he says. "It's been fits and starts for getting this harvest done this year."

In Manitoba, another week of cool, wet weather kept farmers' from going full bore in their fields.

"Manitoba has had approximately three weeks of rainy weather," says Manitoba Agriculture's cereals crops specialist Pam de Rocquigny, adding the provincial harvest is behind schedule.

The central region of the province is most advanced, with the harvest at about 15 to 20 per cent completed, she says. Farmers completed harvesting their winter wheat, with yields between 50 and 70 bushels per acre, but below average quality.

The least harvest progress has likely been in the southwest and northwest regions, de Rocquigny says.

The southwest region received another 30 to 50 millimeters of rain last week, along with cooler than normal temperatures. Water is standing in low lying areas and the wet, windy weather caused some crop lodging.

Most areas of the northwest received over 25 mm. About 60 per cent of the canola was swathed but less than one per cent combined. About 90 per cent of field peas were combined.

The saturated conditions are also affecting crop quality.

"Downgrading due to mildew and sprouting is occurring, and bleaching is also evident in spring cereal crops," de Rocquigny says.

Scattered hail caused additional damage in the central and Interlake regions.



4. Agriculture's global scope growing

by Owen Roberts

The anticipated 40,000 participants arriving for Canada's Outdoor Farm Show this week in Woodstock, Ont., couldn't help but notice how the event increasingly reflects Canadian agriculture's global scope.

Besides showcasing products, farm shows are designed to make sales too, both domestically and globally. With that in mind, new to this year's show was a welcome area designated specifically for international visitors. Staff set up a lounge for private meeting space between vendors and international attendees, to support business transactions.

This effort, co-sponsored by Tourism Oxford, was also designed to promote agri-tourism in Oxford County, one of Ontario's most agriculturally productive regions.

More evidence of agriculture's global outreach could be seen at the new Danish pavilion. With support from the Royal Danish Consulate General and the Danish Trade Council, seven Danish companies came together to centrally showcase the country's strength in farming technology, particularly related to pork production.

"The pavilion is a great place for Canadian farmers to see what innovative ideas and technologies are available to them beyond our

borders," says Stefanie Nagelschmitz, farm show team lead.

High-speed corn planting (six to 10.5 miles per hour) was also a first at this year's show, with demonstrations from Sweden's Vaderstad as well as John Deere.

Grober Nutrition highlighted early research trials on European group housing feeding technology from Forster Technik CalfRail. This took place for the first time in Canada on a farm near Kerwood, Ontario.

Machinery manufacturer Kubota Canada Ltd. expanded its location, now occupying 30,000 square feet of exhibition space.

From south of the border, AGCO partnered with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and others for a cornstalk harvesting demonstration. Interest is growing in developing a supply chain for cornstalk harvesting in Ontario and in Quebec, to support investments in the biochemical and biofuel sectors.

AGCO has produced more than one million large square bales for ethanol facilities in Iowa and Kansas in the past three years.

"We have 750 exhibitors here showcasing, selling and demonstrating their products or services to help Canadians continue to lead the pack as some of the globe's most progressive farmers," says farm show president Doug Wagner.

5. Soy farmers battle bugs and mould

by Christina Franc and Owen Roberts

Soybean farmers in Quebec and Ontario are keeping a watchful eye on crops as they deal with this year's crop of pests and diseases.

Quebec

In Quebec, soy plants are being attacked unusually late in the season by an almost record number of aphids.

In a report released Aug. 29, the Réseau d'avertissements phytosanitaires reported that 50 per cent of the fields surveyed were above the alert threshold. Almost a quarter of those are hosting more than double the 250 aphid limit. Most of these plants are in stage R5 or R6 of development.

Generally at this period, aphids are no longer increasing in numbers, but this year seems to be an exception. There are multiple reasons for this according to Katia Colton-Gagnon, agronomist and co-ordinator for field crops at RAP.

"We believe the abundance of entomopathogenic fungi, organisms that cause illness in aphids, was less than last year, which has led to less effective control of aphid populations this year," Colton-Gagnon says.

As well, the natural enemies of aphids are at a different level of development and are no longer feeding on them.

There is very little that producers can do this late in the game, as insecticide would not be beneficial to most fields. However, a later report released by RAP on Sept. 5 highlights that the numbers are starting to decrease.

"As the plant's stages of development advance, it will become less attractive to aphids," Colton-Gagnon says.

Furthermore, as the season changes, aphids are naturally dwindling in numbers and some are moving to buckthorn shrubs to spend the winter.

"There is little risk that the current aphid population will cause economic damage, as the plants are already well advanced," Colton-Gagnon says. "However, aphids that have been present for two to four weeks may cause economic damage, as plants were at a vulnerable stage."

It will be difficult to predict the actual ramifications until the crop is harvested, she says. Even then, there is no comparison to what the crop could have been so it will be hard to tell.

There are many tools out there, such as a [scouting card](#) for producers. Quebec's version is available [here](#). RAP encourages producers to use these from July until December to help determine if insecticide is necessary.

Ontario

In Ontario, soybeans are having their share of weather-related problems as well, says provincial field crop specialist Horst Bohner.

For example, white mould is evident across the province, with severely impacted fields widespread. At this level, the impact on yield is significant. He's advising farmers to not plant soybeans next year in fields with significant white mould disease this year.

As well, weed pressure is high in some cases, again owing to frequent rainfall. A pre-harvest herbicide may be warranted as a harvest aid; it won't speed up crop maturity, he says, but it helps dry down the crop and weeds more evenly, allowing for timely harvest and reduced field losses.

And finally, the cool growing season and later seeding caused by the wet spring means most of the crop is behind seven to 14 days, Bohner says. "An extended open fall will be required for some fields to reach maturity."

6. Podcast: FCC Edge: Best of Decision-Making

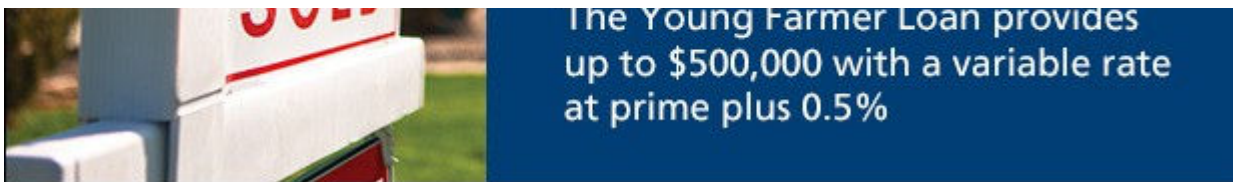
by FCC Learning



When it comes to making tough choices, make sure you're ready. Learn about effective decision-making in this special FCC Edge, compiled from clips of past episodes.

[Listen to podcast](#)





7. Food safety certification gaining ground

By Trudy Kelly Forsythe

Increasing numbers of fruit and vegetable growers are looking into the benefits of food safety certification.

But figuring out the application process can be a challenge. That's why Gillian Flies, who operates an organic vegetable farm in Ontario, decided to take a food safety and certification introductory workshop earlier this year with the assistance of the Greenbelt Fund, a non-profit organization that supports sustainability of agriculture in Ontario.

"It's unclear what the requirement is to get that level of certification," she says. "It was good clarification of the steps necessary to take and it made us think about things we may not have thought about. You don't think of everything you may need to do."

The workshop helped farmers understand the basics of food safety and how to become certified so they can sell to larger customers including distributors, corporate foodservice companies, and retailers. It also gave participants an in-depth look at the application process specifically for CanadaGAP, Canada's food safety program for companies that produce and handle fruits and vegetables.

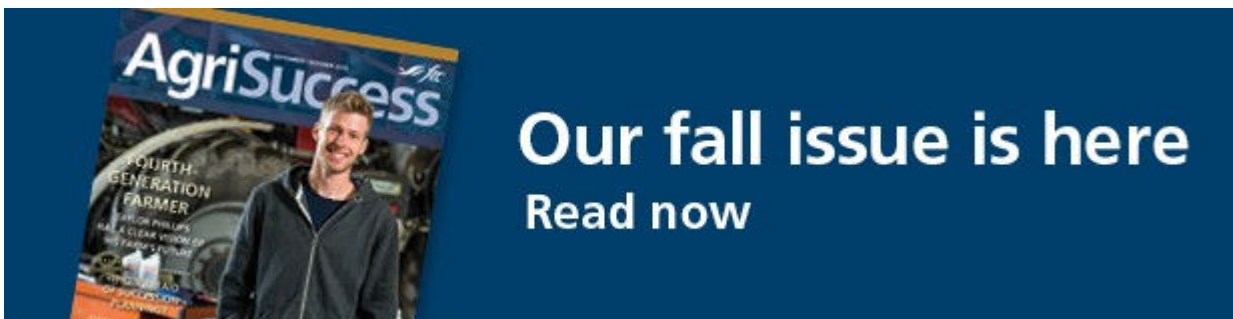
"Retailers are demanding [certification]," says Harold Schooley of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association. "This is not going to go away; it is not a passing fad. Rules get tighter every year."

Schooley, an apple and lavender farmer, has personal experience applying for certification, but was also a CanadaGAP auditor for five years. He advises producers not to leave the application process to the last minute.

"A lot of this is about record keeping, but more intensive than farmers may be used to," Schooley says. "There's a lot of paperwork involved."

He adds that a lot of the issues farmers have to deal with when it comes to food safety is manure, "whether it's supplied too late in the season, closer to harvest, birds, on someone's hands, rodents that put it on packaging; a lot of it is biological. You need clean water, clean hands, clean packing tables, clean packaging materials, clean harvesting bins."

As for which certification a farmer should pursue, Schooley says that depends on who the product is for and what their goal is. CanadaGAP, which became recognized under the Global Food Safety Initiative last year, is about food safety. Other programs have additional components, such as worker welfare and the environment.



8. Cranberry research farm opens

by David Schmidt

A majority of British Columbia's 80 cranberry growers were on hand to officially open the B.C. Cranberry Research Farm in Delta on Sept. 5.

B.C. growers formed the B.C. Cranberry Research Society to own the farm, which was funded by grower levies, a \$203,000 grant from Western Economic Diversification Canada and a \$151,000 grant from the B.C. Investment Agriculture Foundation. IAF is providing another \$67,000 in matching funds to support ongoing research.

The farm is divided into five 120-by-1,000-foot bogs that are being used for varietal testing and to research different management techniques, fertilization and irrigation regimes and pest control methods.

It's the first cranberry research farm in Canada and the fourth in North America. There are 19 named and numbered varieties in replicated trials, including the industry staple, Stevens, with plenty of room to add new varieties in future.

Growers are looking for "big red fruit with good keeping quality," says co-director Grant Keefer. Since most B.C. cranberries are used for Ocean Spray Craisins, "we want fruit that's large enough to be cut several times," he adds.

The new varieties will deliver what Ocean Spray wants, according to research farm scientific director Kim Patten.

"We can double production at the same quality as Stevens but we don't know the unforeseen effects," Patten says. "This will help us find that out."

They'll also come into production much faster. Patten expects DeMoranville and Mullica Queen, two of the most promising new varieties, to produce a crop in two years, while Stevens "might" have a crop in three years.

Researchers hope to learn when the new varieties set their flowers and when the crop is ready to harvest. "Crimson, another new variety, is a month earlier than we're used to and some growers aren't set up for that," Keefer notes.

The new farm is a "field of dreams" attracting researchers from across North America, according to Keefer's co-director, Todd May.

One of those researchers, plant breeder Nick Vorsa of Rutgers University, praised the initiative, telling local growers, "It gives you the opportunity to get ahead of the curve."

"I think we're going to generate some good data and growers are going to be impressed," says Keefer, who believes the research trials will increase the number of acres planted to new varieties.

Only about 800 of the 6,500 acres grown in B.C. are planted to new varieties.

9. Feed enhancer safeguards quality

by Trudy Kelly Forsythe

A Canadian company is offering peace of mind to those involved in the livestock industries with a new feed enhancer designed to help support safe, high-quality feed as well as animal benefits.

Canadian Bio-Systems Inc. has expanded the availability of NutraMix for the Canadian and U.S markets for 2014 and 2015. Including a combination of absorbents, yeast polysaccharides and vitamins, NutraMix is available for use with both monogastric and ruminant livestock, including pigs, poultry, beef cattle and dairy cattle.

The food enhancement product offers an insurance policy to support high-quality feed, says Mark Peters, CBS Inc. manager of sales

and marketing.

"We see growing demand for this type of product that offers peace of mind to feed mills, producers, nutritionists and others in industry, as a tool to help safeguard feed and reduce threats to livestock performance," Peters says.

One concern that fluctuates year-to-year is grain diseases and other potential sources of contaminants. This tool helps address this concern and gives farmers one less thing to worry about as a regular part of their nutrition strategy, says Rob Patterson, CBS Inc. technical services manager.

"It's simple to integrate into a feeding program and we have resources to help the customer ensure it is applied at effective and efficient levels," Patterson says.

A key component of the CBS Inc. NutraMix system is MycoCheck. This is a custom feed analysis tool that gives an accurate picture of feed quality. From that, CBS Inc. can pinpoint the best recommended use of NutraMix.

"The customer sends us a sample, we run the analysis and get back quickly with suggested options," says Patterson. "MycoCheck takes away any guesswork and provides clear information to support the customer's management decisions. Customers only use what they need and get strong value."

10. Market Focus: Watching macro money flow

by Mike Jubinville of Pro Farmer Canada

It seems the large speculative investors continue to vacate the commodity space, not just in agriculture, but also in energy and metals. Why? Returns are sub-par relative to the equity markets. (See chart of Rogers Commodity ETN Elements chart below)

The Rogers commodity index chart is a broad index of commodity futures that tracks 38 commodity futures contracts. The index is divided into three sub-indices -- agriculture, energy and metals.

We could see this trend continue for the remainder of 2014 and perhaps into the first quarter of 2015. There is a broad level of chart support on most commodity indexes being tested right now. If broken decisively, this could usher in the next significant leg lower.

It should also be noted that while large non-commercial spec fund money is coming out of the long side of most commodity markets, there are really two segments of traders here -- the long-only funds and the pure spec traders who can shift between long, neutral and short positions in a futures market.

To further accentuate recent spec money movement, the pure spec traders continue to build net short positions in many grain and oilseed markets. For instance, a net fund short contract position well over 40,000 in the Winnipeg canola market.

Another consideration working against commodity markets these days, whether agriculture sector, metals or energy, has been the massive gain in the value of the U.S. dollar.

Recent strength in the U.S. Dollar Index to 14-month highs has come in response to the European Central Bank's announcement that it will undertake a new round of quantitative easing. The ECB cut euro zone interest rates and unveiled an asset-backed securities program.

The U.S. Dollar Index tracks the performance of the U.S. greenback versus a basket of six other major currencies -- Euro (57.6 per cent weight), Japanese yen (13.6 per cent weight), British pound sterling (11.9 per cent weight), Canadian dollar (9.1 per cent weight), Swedish krona (4.2 per cent weight) and the Swiss franc (3.6 per cent weight).

With a rebound in grain and oilseed prices hinging on expected strong demand for U.S. goods, a rising U.S. dollar makes it more difficult for U.S. exports to compete. And the Canadian dollar is moving generally right along with the U.S. dollar relative to other global currencies.

So then, safe-haven investor buying of the U.S. dollar is making a statement in the commodity and currency world. And it is not just in agricultural commodities, as energy and metals markets are under similar pressures of rising supplies and strengthening U.S. dollar.

Wheat markets are also feeling the pressure as the U.S. and Canadian dollars are currently rising in tandem relative to other currencies such as the Euro, or, perhaps even more importantly, the Russian ruble, which is now at an all-time low relative to North American currencies. As such, exporting wheat from the Black Sea region is looking even more price attractive to foreign buyers these days.

Mike Jubinville of Pro Farmer Canada offers information on commodity markets and marketing strategies. Call 204-654-4290 or visit www.pfcanada.com to find out more about his services.

RJI - Rogers Commodity ETN Elements - Weekly Candlestick Chart



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