Leadership and collaboration in agriculture
Todd Hames | Alberta Wheat Commission chair

As the chair of the Alberta Wheat Commission and a long-time grower, it’s vital for me to engage with all sectors and stakeholders to ensure the future of our industry. This is a crucial time to display the highest level of leadership with a united voice. Through continued relationship building and collaboration, we are able to advance the needle.

In my time with the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC), I spent years as a board member with Alberta Canola and the Canola Council of Canada. Throughout my time, I’ve come to realize the importance of working collaboratively with others, at all levels. Whether it’s coalescing around shared values or understanding the importance of the work that is done on behalf of our farmers, we can really move the needle.

Team Alberta is a great example of this. Team Alberta is a collaboration between AWC, Alberta Barley, Alberta Canola and Alberta Pulse Growers. As an united voice, Team Alberta works to provide input to policy makers. I’ve seen numerous efforts through Team Alberta where we are stronger together, conveying the Alberta farmer’s message effectively to provincial and federal governments. If you haven’t visited Team Alberta’s interactive website, teamalbertacrops.com, or flip to page 8 for Team Alberta’s policy files and advocacy work.

Another beneficial collaboration amongst the wheat value chain is the new crop mission led by Cereals Canada, the Canadian Canola Commission and the Canola Council of Canada. AWC participates in these annual missions to export countries. New crop missions give our farmer representatives the opportunity to promote Canadian wheat and our sustainable farming practices directly to international customers. By helping bridge the gap – farmer to customer – this is a great example of connecting hard through dialogue with our international customers. You can read about new crop missions in more detail on page 5.

There will always be challenges, but given our highly collaborative nature and ability to share, we will continue to advance farmers’ interest. Reflecting on how cohesive we are as an industry gives me confidence that we will continue to ensure the farmers’ voice is heard.

Thank you to my fellow board members who have dedicated time to lead AWC forward. I think our past chair Gary Stanford for his years of dedication, and our new chair, Dave Bishop. We will continue to ensure the farmers’ voice is heard.

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Amalgamation review begins

The Alberta Wheat Commission and Alberta Barley will initiate a process in 2020 to determine whether it makes sense to amalgamate the two commissions. We are working with a single management team since September 2019 to give Alberta producers the best value possible to Alberta wheat and barley farmers.

The reasons to grow full-seeded cereals are:

1. High yield potential, with correspondingly less downgrading over time per acre.
2. The nature of full-seeded cereals have yield potential that surpasses their spring counterparts, with the added advantage of better adaptation to a larger variety of soils.
3. The soil warms up in the spring, allowing the crop to out-compete weeds.
4. A well-established fall-seeded cereal starts growing as soon as the soil warms up in the spring, allowing the crop to out-compete weeds.
5. Seed at the right time

For the complete list of qualifying crops, see the website for more information.

Tips and tricks for successful fall crop:

1. Use top-quality seed and a high seeding rate. Research has shown that seed quality can significantly impact yield potential.
2. Choose the right hybrid or cultivar. Different cultivars have different characteristics, such as disease resistance and yield potential.
3. Apply top-quality soil fertility at the proper rates.
4. Research has shown that seed treatments assist in stand establishment that in-turn contribute to disease resistance.

NOTE: hybrid fall rye has particular seeding rate recommendations:
- Seeding rate: 250,000 seeds per acre
- Fertilizer application: 100 lbs of 5-15-15

For more tips and tricks, see the website.

The real impact of amalgamation

4. By allowing Alberta Barley and Alberta Wheat to work together, we can utilize our collective expertise to create a more efficient and effective organization.
5. The amalgamation will allow us to share resources and expertise, reducing costs and increasing efficiency.

For more information, see the website.
image having a break is only to learn that police officers have walked in on the job. For grain producers, a rail disruption is as welcome as a robbers. It is the only way to block season, growers are saying “enough is enough”, but is
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Right to Repair: new tools needed for farmers

Geoff Backman, Business Development and Markets Manager
Alberta Wheat Commission and Alberta Barley

A similar agreement to Canada’s in 2014. The agreement between members of the Canadian automotive industry.

The American automotive industry followed with a neighborhood mechanic for service, rather than only back to the official dealership. The agreement is why automobiles can still be taken to tool companies to ensure that there would be a competitive market for dealerships. In addition, information was made available to equipment and training information would be available to service providers outside the service information, original equipment manufacturer (OEM) tools, and to have a robust and competitive service industry by ensuring that tools and software required to address new concerns from modern electronics. A potential path forward to access to fair and competitive tools and software required to address new concerns from modern electronics. As increasingly complex electronics are further integrated into farm equipment, farmers are equipped with more precise tools and a wealth of business data about their operations. However, these additional electronics also result in a greater potential for problems that shut down farm operations. This talk re-affirmed that farmers need access to tools and software required for repair is essential to keep farm operations operating efficiently and economically.

At the core of both of these agreements is a recognition that industries are manufactured, sold, operated, maintained and serviced differently from consumer automobiles. Again, this agreement was designed to ensure that manufacturers would make available to owners and independent repair facilities the same diagnostic and repair information that is available to dealerships. In addition, information value added to equipment and tool companies to ensure that there would be a competitive market for diagnostic tools. This agreement is why automobiles can still be taken to a neighborhood mechanic for service, rather than only back to the official dealership. In addition, information was made available to service providers outside the service information, original equipment manufacturer (OEM) tools, and training information would be available to service providers outside the service information.

During FarmTech 2020 the Canada West Foundation’s Carlo Dade gave an update on the need for farmers to be able to repair modern farm equipment themselves. As increasingly complex electronics are further integrated into farm equipment, farmers are equipped with more precise tools and a wealth of business data about their operations. However, these additional electronics also result in a greater potential for problems that shut down farm operations. This talk re-affirmed that farmers need access to tools and software required for repair is essential to keep farm operations operating efficiently and economically.

A similar agreement was struck to ensure that service options were available for commercial vehicles since 2015. This agreement covered both Canada and the United States and highlighted that commercial vehicles are manufactured, sold, operated, maintained and serviced differently from consumer automobiles. Again, this agreement was designed to ensure that manufacturers would make available to owners and independent repair facilities the same diagnostic and repair information that is available to dealerships. In addition, information value added to equipment and tool companies to ensure that there would be a competitive market for diagnostic tools. This agreement is why automobiles can still be taken to a neighborhood mechanic for service, rather than only back to the official dealership. In addition, information was made available to service providers outside the service information, original equipment manufacturer (OEM) tools, and training information would be available to service providers outside the service information.

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Canadian wheat competes on the global stage on quality factors which include high protein content, consistency in flour production between shipments, and exceptional cleanliness. These factors are especially expected in the high-protein market for end products with high protein from other countries. The New Crop Missions also provide opportunities for international trade considerations to be addressed. Conferences can occur between both domestic and international industry (or a variety of both) to explain Canadian wheat export practices and their quality. This allows for direct responses to the export needs and for any improvements to the Canadian wheat export plans. These missions provide Canadian wheat producers the opportunity to produce for foreign markets, and allow improvements to be made in quality and export practices. The New Crop Mission keeps the New Crop Mission focus on the quality of Canadian wheat, and increases the value of the wheat.

New Crop Missions: What’s in it for Canadian farmers?

Meet Dawn Trautman, Nuffield Scholar – Alberta Wheat Commission Scholarship Recipient

My topic of interest is the adoption of smart agriculture practices and policies. Smart agriculture spans in every aspect of production, from the farm to the end consumer. With these challenges there are opportunities to innovate, and for Canada to become a world leader in the sustainable production of healthy and safe food, by prioritizing smart agriculture practices and policies. Smart agriculture practices and policies are essential to the well-being of society.

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Nuffield Scholarship Spotlight

The Alberta FarmSafe Plan is a tool to help you build a custom health and safety management system for your operation.

As a farm owner, operator or manager, you are responsible for knowing and applying best safety management practices. The Alberta FarmSafe Plan is a tool to help you build a custom health and safety management system for your operation. The guide and workbook can be found and downloaded at agsafe.ca.
Balancing grain drying costs with efficiency gains and a call for the elimination of the carbon tax

Alberta Feed Barley Survey 2019

The feed barley survey was initiated to build a long-term source of data that could be used to understand the nutritional profile of barley produced in Alberta since barley is often fed with other feed additives which increases the feed nutrient contents. The survey collected 42 barley samples from a number of fields covering the length and breadth of the province. The survey data will be used to help determine the lowest cost operating options to help farmers who may be weighing these options on their own farms.

In February, the Government of Alberta announced the Efficient Grain Dryer Program funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. The program will help farmers reduce overall energy use and agricultural operations by cost sharing improvements to standard grain drying system components that improve the energy efficiency above the standard configuration. The program has warranted $2 million and is retroactive to expenses incurred prior to April 2019 and will fund applications that were made under a previous program (Farm Energy and AgPro Processing). Applicants will be notified if their existing applications qualify.

At the provincial level, this is a positive step towards providing relief for farmers related to their grain drying costs, and the federal carbon tax, which is set to rise to $30 per tonne on April 1, 2020. The Alberta government repealed the provincial carbon levy on May 30, 2019 and launched a constitutional challenge against the federally imposed carbon backstop under the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act with the Alberta Court of Appeal. On February 24, 2020 the Alberta Court of Appeal ruled that they found the carbon tax to be unconstitutional. While the federal government is calling on the federal government to immediately remove the carbon pricing in Alberta the federal government plans to take the matter to the Supreme Court in March of 2020 to appeal this decision. The Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions, Team Alberta, and other industry groups continue to call for exemptions for all farm fuels from the federal carbon tax and to stop penalizing farmers, who are net-zero contributors, given the emissions the province is responsible for from the production of feed barley and to sequester more carbon than they emit.

While a number of challenges exist in the current carbon tax implementation, they found the carbon tax to be unconstitutional. While the federal government is calling on the federal government to immediately remove the carbon pricing in Alberta the federal government plans to take the matter to the Supreme Court in March of 2020 to appeal this decision. The Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions, Team Alberta, and other industry groups continue to call for exemptions for all farm fuels from the federal carbon tax and to stop penalizing farmers, who are net-zero contributors, given the emissions the province is responsible for from the production of feed barley and to sequester more carbon than they emit.

Alberta Feed Barley

Survey 2019

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This powerful tool for every farm determines appropriate seeding rates based on the quality and size of your seed lot. Utilizing the tool helps ensure ideal seeding rates are used. Seeding rates can affect fertility, disease and weed management, among other things. Input your crop, desired plant stand, grain moisture, vigor and other details. The output provides the seeding rate required to reach your desired plant stand.

Location:
agriculture.alberta.ca/acis/seeding-rate-calculator.jsp

Fusarium Risk Tool

This real-time interactive map indicates potential risk of fusarium head blight infection based on environmental conditions. This tool is available only from June 1 to August 15. Using the interactive map, you can select the weather station closest to you to discover your FHB risk. Use this in addition to in-crop scouting to help make decisions on FHB fungicide sprays.

Location:
agriculture.alberta.ca/acis/fusarium-risk-tool.jsp

Alberta Climate Information Service

This robust weather information website localizes current, recent and historical data averages across Alberta and within specific regions. Based on data collection from over 350 weather stations across Alberta. This powerful tool helps determine how environmental conditions may have affected cropping decisions. This tool is provided by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

Location:
agriculture.alberta.ca/acis/alberta-weather-data-viewer.jsp

The Prairie Pest Monitoring Network

Provides weekly in-season insect pest updates to support local pest management and in-crop decisions. Aligns with the Prairie Crop Disease Monitoring Network to provide timely information regarding disease concerns. Heeds the website and sign up for valuable information.

Location:
prairiepestmonitoring.blogspot.com

Keep It Clean

A website designed for producers and agronomists that provides information and decision-making tools focused on maintaining market access. How we manage our crop in the field and in the bin can impact marketability and maintained access to international markets. This website covers all the bases from pre-harvest interval, glufosinate timing, managing the crop load to the bin, fumigants, and more for canola, cereals, and pulses. This website is a must have in the toolbox.

Location:
keepingitclean.ca

Tools for your agronomic toolbox

Jeremy Boychyn, Agronomy Research Extension Specialist | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

When to act, or maybe even more importantly, when not to act. This is important as it can help you decide when to act or maybe even more importantly, when not to act. This article will quickly highlight tools for your agronomy toolbelt and where to access them.

Batsman did not fly into battle unprepared. He carried his experience with him but also utilized an arsenal of tools that, if implemented properly, afforded him the advantage. Much the same way bartonflys, agronomy is no different. Implementation of the correct tools that add value to your approach and understanding of agronomic challenges can give you the upper hand. This is important as it can help you decide when to act or maybe even more importantly, when not to act.

Keep it Clean

For more information on agronomic tools, check out albertawheat.com and albertabarley.com to access the February 2020 edition of The Growing Point, where you will find in-depth information regarding these tools and many others including Canola Calculator, the Canadian Pest Monitoring Network, the Prairie Pest Monitoring Network, the Alberta Climate Information Service, the Fusarium Risk Tool, and the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions’ agronomy research. For articles, podcasts and videos on timely agronomic information for Alberta Producers, subscribe to The Growing Point for more articles, podcasts and videos on timely agronomic information for Alberta Producers.

This article will quickly highlight tools for your agronomy toolbelt and where to access them.”

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Meet the face behind The Growing Point – Jeremy Boychyn, Alberta Wheat and barley Commissioner’s agronomy research extension specialist. Subscribe online to The Growing Point for articles, podcasts and videos on timely agronomic information for Alberta Producers.

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Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

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albertawheat.com/media/the-growing-point or albertabarley.com/the-growing-point

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Phase out of chlorpyrifos (Lorsban)

In early February 2020, Corteva announced that it would be phasing out production of the chlorpyrifos chemistry, which is the active ingredient in Lorsban. This follows a proposed decision that was released in December 2018 by Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), which proposed the cancellation of chlorpyrifos containing products due to environmental risks.

The Corteva decision came before the PMRAs final decision was released. While Lorsban use in Alberta has been limited to emergency situations, it is recognized as the leading product to control wheat midge, a pest whose damage can lead to severe desiccation of quality. The decision to phase the product out was made due to both a drop in demand for the product, and also because of increased regulatory restrictions on the use of the product in several jurisdictions.

Active and orphaned wells on agricultural land

There has been a long-standing issue with the abandonment of well sites on property owned by farmers, ranchers and other rural landowners in Alberta. There are approximately 190,000 inactive wells in the province with about 45,000 of those orphaned meaning a well with no financially responsible owner.

Many of these wells have been abandoned for as many as 35 years. Wells become abandoned when the oil and gas companies who were granted the authority to drill and operate wells on rural property become insolvent and these wells become abandoned when the oil and gas companies who were granted the authority to drill and operate wells on rural property become insolvent and these wells are unable to take financial accountability for remediation or reclamation of the sites once inactive.

The inactive wells can present problems for land owners as they can contaminate the environment and impose financial burden, while also making it impossible to use this section of their land. Often landowners are unable to take financial accountability for remediation or reclamation of the sites once inactive.

The Farmers Advocate Office (FAO) has released a statement advising landowners (farmers and ranchers) to seek legal advice to clearly understand their rights, responsibilities and risks prior to taking any steps to abandon contractual breaches with energy companies who operate or have abandoned wells on their property. More information can be found by contacting the FAO through the Ag-Hotline at 1-844-728-0144.

Farmers who are facing these concerns are encouraged to file their complaints with the Surplus Rights Board. https://husbandries.alberta.ca

Farmers and ranchers are being cautioned against illegal action, despite complaints with the Surface Rights Board. [https://surfacerights.alberta.ca]

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Federal carbon tax

The federal carbon tax came into effect in Alberta on January 1, 2019, although Alberta saw a repeal of their provincial carbon tax just months earlier on May 30, 2019.

The Federal Fuel Charge amount varies by fuel type and the Government of Canada has announced targeted, limited relief for certain fuel types. The surcharge was also applied on the provincial carbon levy.

The federal carbon tax in Alberta was repealed the provincial carbon levy on May 30, 2019 and launched a constitutional challenge against the federally imposed carbon tax. The Federal carbon tax has been propagated in order to improve the competitiveness of Alberta farmers. The Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions, Team Alberta, and other industry groups continue to call on exemption for all farm fuels from the carbon tax in order to improve the competitiveness of Alberta farmers.