ALBERTA CANOLA

Sask**Canola** 



() canolacouncil

# CANOLADIGEST

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# Alberta Canola Grower

Engagement Meetings November 21 - Lethbridge November 26 - Lacombe November 28 - Camrose December 11 - Grande Prairie December 18 - Web Broadcast albertacanola.com/events

### Canola Week 2024

December 3-5 TCU Place, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. canolacouncil.org/event/canola-week-2024

### Sask Crops Forum

January 14-15 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan saskcanola.com/events

### SaskOilseeds AGM

January 15, during Sask Crops Forum Saskatoon, Saskatchewan saskcanola.com/events

### Alberta Canola Conference, AGM and Research Symposium

January 22-23 Red Deer, Alberta albertacanola.com/events





BY JAY WHETTER

plopped down on a chair in the outdoor bar at Bobby O'Brien's pub on King Street in Kitchener, Ontario. I was feeling a little verklempt after dropping off my younger son at the University of Waterloo. Game one of the National Football League season was on all of the TVs, including a massive screen mounted on a brick wall in the square. The Kansas City Chiefs were at home to the Baltimore Ravens. On their very first drive, the Baltimore offensive line was flagged three times for the same illegal formation penalty. This is unusual.

"What's going on with these penalties?" I asked the young guy with backwards cap sitting two chairs over.

He said the NFL officials were more strictly enforcing a rule on positioning of offensive linemen. They have to be in line with the centre, more or less. They can't set up behind the line of scrimmage to gain a step on the oncoming pass rushers. The rule is meant to give defensive backs an equal chance to pressure quarterbacks and get more sacks. The big Baltimore O-line was slow to catch on.

This opened up a conversation. The young guy works in construction. He is from Kitchener, is working in Thunder Bay on a new jail, and was back in town for a wedding. He mentioned a friend, also in construction, who is working on a new Google office in Kitchener. "You know the office has a climbing wall and a slide!" he said.

Why would Google do this?

I found an article in *Architectural Digest* called, "You won't believe work gets done at these three Google offices." The author, Katherine McLaughlin, wrote about the bright, colourful buildings with comfortable common areas and slides, climbing walls, nap pods and basketball courts. This is all "intentional." The article says Google operates on a "belief that if the people who are working there are happy, healthy, and comfortable, then the company itself will thrive too. It's in this idea that the jungle-gym-like elements that Google offices are known for become as integral as a desk or a filing cabinet." The article then quotes Joshua Bridie, Google's director of global interior design: "They're there because there is a need for the brain to disconnect and reconnect, so you can refocus your energies in an incredibly productive way."

Google isn't in the business of giving people fun things to do at the office. They are in the business of finding creative ways to make money. That creativity comes from attracting top talent and keeping them at their creative bests.

This reminds me of an article I wrote recently about Jeremy Oatey, whom I met in April. The U.K. farmer keeps on top of all government programs and how to best profit from them. He also has a wildly diverse operation, including a dog walking park he built on an "inconvenient" field. Customers book time slots online, pay £6 per half hour and get a code to access the park for their time slot. "It runs itself," Oatey says. "I can't believe it really."

One of your goals this winter could be to think of one new money maker. In the business management article in this issue, Farm Management Canada executive director, Heather Watson, writes about clear and actionable SMART goals. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. The SMART framework, Watson writes, helps ensure your goals are not just dreams or wishes, but can be realized.

You'll think of something. If you need time on a climbing wall to disconnect and then reconnect and get those creatives juices flowing, go for it.

Like the NFL, agriculture always seems to have new rules. Whether these rules relate to trade, climate policy, crop insurance, labour, taxes or when penciling out profit margins, farmers always have to be ready to adapt. It can be exhausting. Time off, when possible, is important. Even if you just take a week off at home and watch movies. Disconnecting and reconnecting is essential to creativity, and creativity – as Google and Jeremy Oatey remind me – is often at the root of business success.

New rules sometimes mean the quarterback gets pressured and sacked more often. New rules also mean an opportunity to get more sacks yourself. Be the sacker.

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#### ALBERTA CANOLA OFFICE

Karla Bergstrom, Alberta Canola Producers Commission 14560 116 Avenue NW Edmonton, AB T5M 3E9 (780) 454-0844 Fax: (780) 451-6933 Email: karla@albertacanola.com

#### SASKOILSEEDS OFFICE

Tracy Broughton, SaskOilseeds 225 - 415 Wellman Crescent Saskatoon, SK, S7T OJ1 (306) 975-0262 Email: tbroughton@saskoilseeds.com

#### MANITOBA CANOLA GROWERS OFFICE

Delaney Ross Burtnack, Manitoba Canola Growers Association 400 – 167 Lombard Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3B 0T6 (204) 982-2120 Email: delaney@canolagrowers.com

#### CANOLA COUNCIL OF CANADA

Publisher 400 - 167 Lombard Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3B 0T6 (204) 982-2100 Fax: (204) 942-1841

#### EDITORIAL OFFICE

Jay Whetter, Editor Canola Council of Canada 400 - 167 Lombard Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3B 0T6 | (807) 466-3025 Email: whetterj@canolacouncil.org

DESIGN: Marshal Yard (204) 452-9446 Email: connect@marshalyard.ca www.marshalyard.ca

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# **Invest in the Future:** Grower Funded Canola Research Needs Your Vote

While all the pillars of Alberta Canola's work support the long-term success of canola growers, research investments provide a notable and direct benefit to growers, helping them navigate the increasing challenges of canola production.



"Growers continue to face unpredictable weather, along with the evolution of diseases and feeling the increased pressure to produce more. We need research to tackle these issues," says Drumheller-area canola grower Alan Hampton, chair of Alberta

Canola's research committee. *"Research provides the most immediate advantages to growers."* 

### **Farmers Value Research**

Growers across the province seem to agree. Earlier this year, Alberta Canola conducted a survey of its members. Based on approximately 400 responses received, producers said that research and development, innovation and economics are Alberta Canola's top deliverables. An overwhelming majority of respondents — a full 96 percent, in fact — said Alberta Canola's investment in research is valuable, including 70 percent calling it "very valuable".

One reason Alberta Canola's research efforts to date have proven so successful is the organization's ability to leverage producer dollars with partner funding. For the 2024 research projects, Alberta Canola captured an additional \$4.50 of partner funding for every dollar it committed to research. Overall, Alberta Canola's research portfolio has a leverage ratio of 7.36:1.

However, these combined resources are under significant strain trying to meet rising costs and growing needs. Public funding for research has dramatically declined, which means "producers are left holding the research bag, especially for the agronomic and regional research that directly impacts producers on their farms," Hampton says. Meanwhile, the cost of conducting research has dramatically risen.

"The cost of research today has been the biggest shock," says Karla Bergstrom, Alberta Canola's executive director. "Where we used to have projects coming in at \$50,000, now we have project asks of over \$800,000. We highly value our funding partnerships to further canola research and its advancement - because without them, we wouldn't be able to fund our current portfolio."

### Alberta Canola's 35th Annual General Meeting Red Deer Resort & Casino and Online Event, January 22, 2025

Voting registration for the AGM is accessed through the conference registration at albertacanola.com/events

### The Case for More Research Funding

Alberta Canola has not raised its service charge since 2003. Over the past 20 years, every cost in our industry has surged, while public funds for research have plummeted and the pressure on the industry — from regulatory burden to consumer demands to sustainability expectations — has skyrocketed. Simultaneously, Alberta's canola production has declined by nearly 25 percent from a high of seven million tonnes in 2017. These factors have resulted in Alberta Canola operating in deficit for five of the last six years.

Currently, Alberta Canola aims to invest approximately \$1 million annually into research, or about 27 percent of its total budget. It's the most the organization can currently afford, but it's considerably lower than the research commitments achieved by other Canadian prairie crop commissions. Tight funding often forces Alberta Canola's research committee to make difficult decisions.

"We have to turn away a lot of good projects we wish we could fund, nevermind other funding streams we simply cannot entertain to look at," says Hampton. "It's one thing to be fiscally responsible. It's another to decline important projects that could positively impact producers because the budget is so tight."

Alberta Canola continually looks to invest into agronomic research, and genetic and market development. Hampton says, moving forward, canola varieties that can better withstand heat and drought will be a top priority. "Erratic growing conditions seem to be the new normal. There is a strong demand for this oilseed crop, but without investing more in research, we're going to struggle to sustain current production," he says.

### A Vote for the Future

Alberta Canola will be asking its members to approve a service charge increase at its January 2025 Annual General Meeting. The board resolution will be published on Alberta Canola's website in advance of the meeting. All eligible producers will have the opportunity to vote on this resolution at the AGM, which can be attended in person or online.

For those who value canola as viable and profitable crop in your rotation, Hampton's message is clear: "Make sure your voice is heard. Vote 'Yes' for the service charge increase at the AGM in January." For more information, visit Alberta Canola's website at **albertacanola.com/events**.





# As of August 1, 2024, SaskCanola and SaskFlax have fully amalgamated into a single organization... **SaskOilseeds!**

Our new brand is currently a work in progress, and we can't wait to share more with you soon.

# SaskOilseeds announces election for board of directors

Five nominations have been received to fill four director positions on the recently formed Saskatchewan Oilseeds Development Commission board of directors. Three of the nominees are current SaskOilseeds directors who are eligible to run for a second term – David Altrogge (Saint Benedict), Codie Nagy (Ogema), and Dean Roberts (Coleville). The other two nominees are former SaskFlax directors – Patricia Lung (Lake Lenore) and Thomas MacKenzie (Zehner).

Registered producers should have received a letter the week of November 1st with instructions on how to select their director choices from the nominated candidates in the online voting platform. Voting must be completed by November 29th.



Experience an exciting program featuring a lineup of dynamic speakers alongside the Saskatchewan crop commissions' annual general meetings, plus plenty of networking opportunities!

General Rick Hillier will kick off day one with a leadership keynote. Later that afternoon, Shaun Haney with RealAgriculture will moderate a research investments discussion with panelists from the University of Saskatchewan College of Agriculture and Bioresources, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, and Global Institute for Food Security. Day two will start with Nutrien's chief economist Jason Newton providing a global economic outlook. Our last guests will take the stage to host a live taping of their well-known podcast Curse of Politics.

SaskOilseeds' AGM will be held on January 15. The purpose of the AGM is to review audited financials and activities from the previous year, including research investments, policy and advocacy initiatives, and grower programs. Levy-paying Saskatchewan canola and flax producers are eligible to vote on motions and resolutions.





# Can a cover crop help manage flea beetles?

Kenzie Friesen of Arnaud, Manitoba is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Agroecology at the U of M and is working with professor Yvonne Lawley on a study called "Fall rye cover crops protecting canola from flea beetles."

Friesen first met Lawley in the summer of 2023 when Friesen worked as a summer student for her lab. "The project aims to evaluate the impact of overwintering cover crops, specifically fall rye, on flea beetle damage in canola," Friesen says. "The fall rye was terminated using glyphosate at four different times: seven days before seeding canola, the day after seeding canola, at the canola cotyledon stage, and at the canola two-leaf stage. Treatments with fall rye were compared to a control treatment with no fall rye cover crop."

When asked about on-farm value, Friesen explained that farmers currently rely heavily on insecticide seed treatments, but insecticide resistance and environmental concerns make it necessary to explore alternative pest management strategies. "This project could offer farmers a natural, integrated pest management solution that reduces their dependence on chemical insecticides. Through this study, we explored whether different termination timings of fall rye can influence flea beetle damage and canola yield. We planted open-pollinated fall rye at 70 pounds per acre in September followed by Roundup Ready canola the following spring." The RBC Scholars in Sustainable Agriculture program, offered at the University of Manitoba (U of M), allows students to work with faculty researchers on low-emission agriculture research.



Kenzie Friesen (right) works with U of M professor Yvonne Lawley (left) on a study to see how a fall rye cover crop can help with flea beetle management. Fellow researcher Ramanpreet Brar is in the middle.

The research will continue into next year, "This small-plot research project will complement on-farm testing in 2025 as part of the Manitoba Canola Growers on-farm research," Friesen explains.

For more research information, please read the Manitoba Canola Growers research update on page 6 of Science Digest.



For further research updates, visit www.canolagrowers.com/research or scan the QR code.





# **Carbon Chaos:** A primer on carbon markets

### BY JAY WHETTER

The carbon market is like a black box. Is agriculture, in general, missing a big opportunity to make more money from carbon? Will carbon "farming" become a bigger and bigger part of our lives?

raft Heinz makes a lot of salad dressing and mayonnaise, and they often make it with canola oil. Kraft Heinz, like a lot of companies, also pledges to be carbon neutral, or net zero, by 2050. This means the company's complete value chain, including the farmers who produce their vegetable oils, will remove as much greenhouse gas from the atmosphere as it emits.

Kraft Heinz has a number of ways to meet that goal, and one is reformulation of products or changing to ingredients with lower

carbon intensity. This where Canadian canola oil needs to shine if it is to remain a Kraft Heinz preferred ingredient.

Kate Yauk, Kraft Heinz's global director of sustainability, says the company will look for partners who can prove that the carbon life cycle analysis of their ingredient is better than their competitors. "We call this smart sourcing," she says.

Renewable fuel manufacturers also look for feedstock with lower carbon intensity. Carbon intensity is net emissions divided by tonnes of crop produced. The lower the carbon intensity of a feedstock, the less of it a fuel manufacturer needs to reach the carbon reduction standards. This is the feedstock fuel manufacturers want to buy.

At Canola Week 2023 in Calgary, Bob Larocque, president and CEO of the Canadian Fuels Association, called carbon intensity a "game changer."

The game, however, seems to change all the time.

In March 2024, the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) ruled: "While many investors today are using scope 3 information in their investment decision making, based upon public feedback, we are not requiring scope 3 emissions disclosure at this time."

Scope 1 covers direct emissions from within a company's operations. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions to produce the energy a company purchases for its operations. Scope 3 covers all other indirect emissions within a company's value chain, including from farmers who produce ingredients and truckers who deliver goods to Superstore.

Did the SEC scope 3 decision change how canola processors approach their programs with farmers?

Daiana Endruweit, Bunge's senior manager for corporate

"We believe that the agriculture of the future is lowcarbon, and we want to be the strategic partner of farmers and customers in sustainable solutions for oilseeds, commodities and related ingredients."

— Daiana Endruweit, Bunge

reputation, says "our approach to sustainability is based on doing the right thing, not on SEC requirements."

Endruweit says Bunge's "decarbonization approach" includes reduced emissions in its direct operations and supply chains. "We believe that the agriculture of the future is low-carbon, and we want to be the strategic partner of farmers and customers in sustainable solutions for oilseeds, commodities and related ingredients," Endruweit says.

However, some momentum has left the agriculture carbon market.

Sally Flis, director of sustainable agriculture programs for Nutrien, says the carbon market in general has changed a lot since 2021. "While many companies were quick to offer programs in the early days, there are fewer options on the market today as our industry learns more about the carbon market and the best ways to promote sustainable agriculture practices," Flis says.

Marty Seymour left FCC three years ago to start CarbonRX. His new company works with large farmers – large landowners – to extract extra revenue through carbon credits. "I severely underestimated the amount of lifting it would take to help commercialize a quality carbon credit on Western Canadian farms," he says.

More on these companies in a bit. First, we need to distinguish between carbon intensity and carbon credits.

#### **Carbon intensity**

Carbon intensity is a measure of the carbon required to produce a tonne of output, say canola er intensity

seed. The goal is lower intensity.

Anything that reduces the carbon inputs per tonne of crop will improve the intensity. No-till, for example, will reduce carbon inputs in terms of diesel fuel and possibly also increase carbon sequestration through increased organic matter. Increasing output through higher yields per input will also improve the intensity score.

"The lower the carbon intensity, the more competitive canola is vis a vis other feedstocks," says Chris Vervaet, executive director of the Canadian Oilseed Processors Association. "While estimating carbon intensity on aggregate has its shortcomings, the datasets and methodologies are constantly improving, allowing for a good measure of performance for a whole production zone." This approach, Vervaet adds, relieves individual farms from the duties of measurement and data tracking, while still supporting continuous improvement.

#### **Carbon credits**

Carbon credits are often considered the currency of voluntary or mandatory carbon markets and fit into two primary boxes – inset and offset.

Corporate environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments drive voluntary markets while government regulations drive mandatory markets. Both markets use carbon inset and offset credits to incentivize emission reductions.

**Inset credits.** These come from companies within a supply chain. Perhaps a publicly-traded company in the canola industry needs to show shareholders that it is taking action on carbon, based on ESG commitments. It sets up a program to promote emissions reduction practices within its supply chain, and will pay participants based on how much carbon they remove.

**Offset credits.** These are from outside a supply chain. Someone generates a credit, say through sequestration of carbon in soil, and someone else buys it. A company buying credits can deal directly with big farmers or, in most cases, with farm credit aggregators.

The key, Seymour says, is that carbon offset credits pay for new practices that a farm wouldn't otherwise do if not for the payment. Credits are based on a measured change from baseline soil carbon to a new higher level of stored carbon. It must be additional to any improvements that would come from standard practice, and it has to be permanent.

"People paying for credits – people who think the world is on fire – are asking, 'what have you done for me lately.' They're not looking back," Seymour says. "They want to see continuous improvement."

#### Going after carbon credits

Farmers can generate credits through practices that sequester carbon in the soil or reduce emissions. Formulas convert these practices into tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, and farmers can sell those credits. Aggregating companies source credits from a great number of farms that are too small and generate too few credits on their own to arrange deals directly with credit buyers. The aggregator of carbon credits is like a grain company that collects grain from many farmers for big bulk shipments.

"If you own land, you are in a powerful position to leverage the carbon removal potential of that land," Seymour says. Agriculture and forestry are the two industries with the most potential to sequester carbon.

And yet, most farmers avoid the carbon market.

University of Alberta graduate student Nimanthika Lokuge, in a 2022 paper, cited World Bank research showing that only about one per cent of global carbon credits are generated through agriculture. Lokuge also wrote that farmers "hardly participate" in the Alberta Emission Offset Program, one of the most active credit exchanges in North America.

In her paper, "Carbon-Credit Systems in Agriculture: A Review of Literature," published in *The School of Public Policy Publications*, Lokuge explained why farmers stay away: "This appears partly due to a history of regulatory risk: the agriculture sector has seen the revocation of carbon-credit eligibility for certain practices, and invalidated credits can lead to significant financial losses for farmers. Farmers are also reluctant to participate due to the inadequacy of offset credit revenues



in covering the foregone costs of implementing emission-reduction practices given current carbon-offset prices and the emissions level per farm."

Alberta farmers will often take on carbon-reducing practices for their own economic reasons, Lokuge writes, but will hold off on the credit market until it pays better.

But is waiting the right strategy? Seymour's advice is that farmers looking to sell carbon credits in the future should measure their soil organic matter and soil organic carbon now before making any major changes. This is no simple step. "The biggest barrier is the cost of soil sampling," Seymour says. Seymour uses Saskatoon company Xact Ag that measures soil carbon through remote sensing. "This is the only way to scale. Grid sampling takes the economics out of it," he says.

"Carbon is a data play," Seymour adds. "In the absence of data, you can't participate."

Once the baseline is established, farmers can take on practices to improve soil organic matter and soil organic carbon. And generate credits.

Accurate measurement and collection of data are essential because "companies are very careful to protect themselves against greenwashing," Seymour says.

Credits could be reversed if an audit shows they're not legit. In that

case, farmers run the risk of paying back for damages – a risk that Lokuge noted. Seymour would like to see carbon credits protected through some sort of public insurance, like crop insurance. "Price stability and even a price floor could be strengthened if buyers knew the credits purchased were insured against an Act of

God or if a farmer changed practices," he says.

Farmers could reduce this risk by avoiding programs that lock them into long-term commitments. One example is Nutrien's Sustainable Nitrogen Outcomes Program, which pays farmers for adopting practices that reduce emissions from fertilizer use. It started as a pilot program in 2021.

The protocol is based on 4R nitrogen management practices, with equations to calculate emissions reductions in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO,eq).

Nutrien pays \$65 per tonne of  $CO_2$ eq, which usually works out to \$2 to \$7 per acre, Flis says. Moving from basic to intermediate to advanced 4R will increase the payment.

The program does require a "fairly heavy data lift," Flis says. Farmers need to show all nutrient input with as-applied maps, show receipts and may need to take date- and location-stamped photos showing what crop is growing where. "Our program is a good way to get introduced to what data collection for a carbon market would look like," Flis says.

Flis says Nutrien started this program for a few reasons: to contribute to its own sustainability goals, to help major farm product end-users measure and reduce their scope 3 emissions, and to support its agronomy and nutrient sales business.

Growers interested can go to their local Nutrien retail, which provides basic details and connects them with the company's regional sustainable agriculture managers.

While Canadian farmers contemplate whether they're ready to jump into carbon credits, the whole industry strives for improved carbon intensity – mostly a collective effort at this time.

### How does Canadian canola compare on carbon intensity?

 $(S\&T)^2$  Consultants conducted a study for the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops (CRSC) to calculate the carbon intensity of Canadian canola. The November 2022 report calculated average greenhouse gas emissions for Canadian canola at 164 kg  $CO_2eq$ per tonne of seed yield. This is based on direct on-farm energy use, including for field equipment, trucking and grain drying, emissions associated with fertilizer manufacturing, emissions associated with the production of seeds and pesticides, direct and indirect nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural soils, and changes in soil organic carbon from land management changes.

"It's important to highlight that everything farmers have done up to today is captured in these numbers," Vervaet says.

Also in 2022, the Global Institute for Food Security at the University of Saskatchewan commissioned Nicole Bamber and colleagues at the University of British Columbia to produce the report, "Carbon footprint analysis of Saskatchewan and Canadian field crops and comparison to international competitors." It compared canola greenhouse gas (GHG) lifecycle emissions for a few countries and a few key crops, including canola. The report concluded that Australia had the lowest GHG per kilogram of canola produced, with Canada

To get the \$2 to \$7 per acre per year, the program does require a "fairly heavy data lift."

— Sally Flis, Nutrien

second, France third and Germany fourth. This changed somewhat when the totals included soil carbon change. Canada is the only country increasing soil carbon, largely through reduced tillage and reduced summer fallow. With soil carbon change included, Canada and Australia GHG emissions per kilogram of canola are almost the same, and petter than Australia

Saskatchewan alone is better than Australia.

Vervaet says Canadian canola has credible numbers to support its carbon intensity, and there is a lot of rigour behind those numbers. "Do we need to lower our carbon intensity? You bet," he says. "The more you can reduce carbon footprint, the more attractive Canadian canola is for biofuels, food and feed."

Vervaet is not just blowing smoke. At the World Agri-Tech Innovation Summit in San Francisco in March 2024, the author of this article sat in on a table discussion with Patrick Sheridan, vice president global agriculture, sustainability and seed for Kraft Heinz. Sheridan was talking about procuring tomatoes for ketchup. He was asked how one producer with a lower carbon intensity per tonne of tomatoes is rewarded for that achievement. "That producer gets our business," Sheridan says.

"Monetization of carbon is likely here to stay," Vervaet says, but that monetization may not always be a payment per tonne of carbon reduced or sequestered. Vervaet expects the market will eventually move to how Sheridan described. Lower carbon intensity will be a demand driver and determine how crops will compete. And ultimately, that will be reflected in the canola price at elevators and processors.

The general advice, for now, is to keep an eye out for opportunities, for a shift in carbon priorities, and for a rise in carbon credit prices.

"Stay curious," Seymour says. "I believe all things in the future will be measured by emissions."

As for the canola industry in general, Vervaet agrees that the Canadian canola industry wants to show leadership on this. "We want to show continuous improvement. We want more adoption of different practices to improve our carbon score."

-Jay Whetter is the editor of Canola Digest.

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# Choose the Right Canola Seed: Navigating Disease Resistance with Proven® Seed

Choosing the right canola seed is crucial for optimal yield and farm success and disease pressures only emphasize the importance of a well-informed decision. With the widest portfolio of highly rated disease resistant hybrids in all the major herbicide platforms, Proven Seed helps farmers rotate for effective weed and disease resistance.

### Understanding Disease Resistance Profiles

The First Line of Defense Understanding the resistance profiles of canola hybrids is crucial when making your seed selection:

- **Blackleg:** To prevent severe yield loss from this fungal pathogen, opt for hybrids with strong resistance (R rating) and specific genes guarding against prevalent blackleg races.
- Clubroot: Combat the persistent soil threat of clubroot by choosing hybrids with genetic resistance, prioritizing multigenic options.
  While resistance is key, supplement with crop rotation and sanitation practices.
- **Sclerotinia:** Mitigate the impact of sclerotinia stem rot on harvest quality by selecting vigorous hybrids and incorporating fungicide treatments for better disease management.
- Verticillium Stripe: Address the emerging threat of this fungal disease by minimizing soil and spore movement, managing inoculum levels and extending crop rotations to a minimum one year in three for canola.

### Geographic and Environmental Considerations

The disease pressures your crop may face largely depend on your location and environmental conditions:

- Assess the historical disease prevalence in your area with help from Nutrien Ag Solutions' Crop Production Advisors.
- **Consider soil health** and previous cropping patterns, as these influence disease risks.
- Adapt seed choices to match your specific field conditions. For instance, fields prone to wet conditions may favor seeds known for sclerotinia resistance.

### Seed Performance and Agronomic Traits

While disease resistance is paramount, do not overlook other critical performance traits:

- **Yield Potential:** Ensure the variety offers competitive yield potential under your local farming conditions.
- Maturity and Hybrid Vigour: Select seeds that align with your growing season and that demonstrate robust growth and adaptability.

### **Disease Management Strategies**

A holistic approach to disease management amplifies the benefits of choosing the right seed:

- **Practice crop rotation**, especially with nonhost crops, to break disease cycles.
- Implement good agronomic practices, including proper field sanitation and residue management.

Use fungicide
treatments strategically,
guided by scouting and
environmental conditions.

### Profitability and Return on Investment (ROI)

Finally, assess the economic implications of your seed choice:

- Cost vs. expected benefits. Paying a premium for high-resistance seeds may result in better ROI due to reduced disease management costs and improved yields.
- Make data-driven decisions with Proven Seed resources such as trial data and performance reports.

# Informed Decision-Making for Success

Selecting the ideal canola seed involves balancing disease resistance, agronomic traits and economic considerations. Prioritize disease-resistant hybrids and leverage resources like Nutrien Ag Solutions' Crop Production Advisors to craft a comprehensive disease management strategy for your farm. By investing in the right seed today, you'll optimize yields and stay ahead of the disease curve.



Always read and follow insect resistance management requirements (where applicable), grain marketing and all other stewardship practices and pesticide label directions. Scan the QR code or visit traits.bayer.ca/en/product-legal to review important stewardship and product information including regulatory status, grain marketing requirements, herbicide and insect tolerance, pesticide use and product trial results.

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# On Proven Ground



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Visit **ProvenSeed.ca** to explore a wide range of canola hybrids designed to meet your unique farming needs.

# Three fertilizer tests to lower your risk

Here are three low-cost, low-risk tests to provide

valuable new observations on yield potential, major hidden soil nutrient issues and right rates.

### Targeted soil samples

The most common soil sampling practice is to collect one composite sample per field. An appropriate composite is based on 12-20 sub-samples or "cores" from the most productive areas. However, by avoiding low-producing areas, you may be missing critical insight to boost yield potential in those areas. With a second (or third) targeted compost, you may discover something that could be solved, or at least improved, with some targeted management.

**COST:** Around \$100 per field to collect and analyze one targeted soil test.

Primarv Targeted sample composite problem area Nitrogen (NO<sub>3</sub>-N), lb./ac. 106 50 405 149 Phosphorus (P), Ib./ac. Potassium (K), lb./ac. 1,900 298 Sulphur (SO<sub>4</sub>-S), lb./ac. 40 38 Organic matter, % 4.5 1.6 Hа 6 6.5 Salinity (dS/m) 0.3 0.4

↑ Lyle Cowell, senior agronomist with Nutrien, provides this real example where he sampled the usual higher-yielding area and targeted a poor-yielding area in the same field. "A sample site in the poor area of a field may be of as much or more value than a composite sample from the good areas of a field," Cowell says "The composite sample missed that a potential huge part of the field was potassium deficient and that a targeted high rate of potassium in this area could greatly improve the yield potential."

**DIFFICULTY:** Easy







### ...when flexibility and yield unite

Optimum<sup>®</sup> GLY is the highest yielding glyphosate-tolerant trait on the market, created to unlock agronomic excellence.

Pioneer<sup>®</sup> brand canola hybrids with the Optimum GLY trait allow you to make the herbicide applications you need without impacting the yield potential of the hybrids you love.

### Learn more at Pioneer.com/ca

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#### **Nitrogen strips**

Whatever nitrogen rate you use, try a few strips with 125 or 150 per cent of that rate. Compare yields with the combine yield monitor or, ideally, carts with scales. Results may support existing practices or identify a potential adjustment. If yields do not increase in the strips, perhaps another nutrient is limiting. Or perhaps weather and soil conditions simply don't support higher yields. All of these are valuable learnings.

**COST:** Urea in Western Canada as of July 2024 was around \$650 per tonne, or 64¢ per pound of actual N. So a 100 lb./ac. rate of actual nitrogen (applied as urea) would be \$64 per acre. An extra 50 lb./ac. (150 per cent rate) would add \$32 per acre. A 60-foot drill going the full length of a quarter section (2,640 feet) covers 3.6 acres, including the headland area. So \$32 multiplied by 3.6 acres adds up to \$115 per strip for the 50 per cent extra nitrogen. If that extra nitrogen increases yields by two or three bushels per acre in that strip, the experiment will break even.

**DIFFICULTY:** If applying nitrogen on its own (not in a blend), adjusting rates is relatively easy. Curtis de Gooijer with Bourgault says their newer systems are controlled in the cab and "it's as simple as typing in a new rate as you are seeding." Kris Cherewyk with Väderstad says, "Adjusting nitrogen rates with the Väderstad iCon wireless control system is quick and simple."

#### **Tissue tests**

This past summer, a northern Saskatchewan agronomist went to a canola field to check on "textbook sulphur deficiency." The applied sulphur rate seemed reasonable, but with a wet May and June, sulphur likely leached down. Saturated soils early in the season also meant relatively shallow crop rooting depth. Just to be sure, the agronomist ran a tissue test.

The recommended practice with a tissue test is to also submit separate soil samples from the area around the sick and healthy plants. This can indicate whether the tissue test results are due to an uptake issue (too much water for proper root function) or an actual soil shortage.

Tissue results in this case showed adequate nutrients, including sulphur, in the healthy leaves and acute sulphur deficiency in the sick leaves. The agronomist was right. A localized sulphur top dress could help if soils were also deficient.

**COST:** A complete plant tissue test analysis (macros and micros) will be around \$60. Two tests – one from a healthy plant and one from a poor plant – are \$120. Analysis for a pair of soils tests is about the same price.

**DIFFICULTY:** As long as you follow the lab protocols, which are straightforward but specific, the tests are simple and practical.

# Lobbying for trade

The Canola Council of Canada and Canadian Canola Growers Association will co-host a canola lobby day on November 5. Open and predictable trade is, again, a hot topic.

### BY TENESHA LAWSON AND TROY SHERMAN

### Every year, board members and staff

from Canadian Canola Growers Association (CCGA) and the Canola Council of Canada (CCC) gather on Parliament Hill to meet with parliamentarians and senior political staff to advocate for Canada's canola value chain, including its 40,000 farmers.

Lobby day is one of the many ways both organizations regularly engage with government throughout the year.

### **ADVOCACY PRIORITIES**

CCGA brings a canola farmer perspective to national policy conversations. Use the QR code to see current issues.

The CCC speaks for the industry on issues affecting the entire canola value chain. Visit the CCC website for advocacy priorities.



This year's no different. On November 5, 2024, representatives from the whole canola value chain will be in Ottawa sitting across from federal decision-makers and policy shapers to outline important issues that impact competitiveness and profitability.

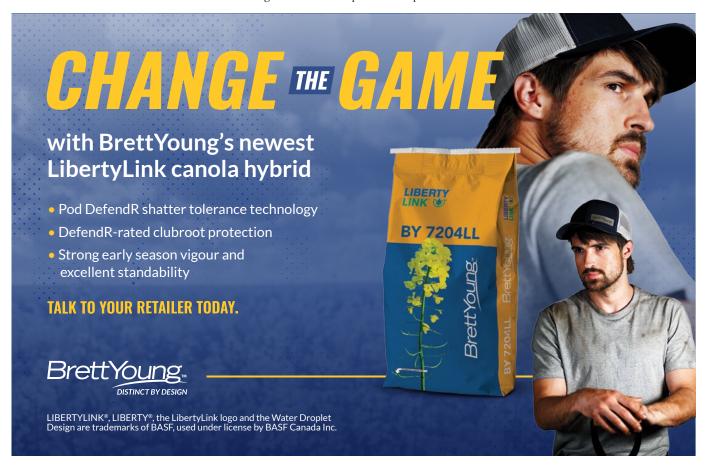
At the time of writing in mid-September, the two national canola organizations had identified two key topics:

- Trade and market diversification. Trade is vital to the success of canola farmers, processors and exporters, making it critical to keep existing markets open while diversifying and growing new ones, like canola-based biofuels. The CCC and CCGA advocate for strong, multilateral trade rules.
- 2. Reliable rail transportation. Bulk rail shipping is the only practical means to move canola seed, oil and meal from grain elevator and processor to port.

CCGA and the CCC advocate for a reliable transportation network farmers, processors and exporters can rely on to ship their products domestically and internationally.

Policy decisions have real implications to canola profitability all along the value chain. The lobby day allows canola farmers and stakeholders to connect directly with policymakers about the realities of the canola business and how policies can create opportunities or obstacles for business success.

— Tenesha Lawson is manager of stakeholder communications for Canadian Canola Growers Association. Troy Sherman is senior director, government and industry relations, for the Canola Council of Canada.





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# SMART goals drive farm success

Everyone has goals – personal goals, and of course professional goals. But how can you set yourself up for success in achieving your goals? It's simple. Write them down, and make them Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

#### BY HEATHER WATSON

### Farming requires careful planning and

**continuous improvement.** It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day operation and "putting out fires," and lose sight of your long-term goals and how you are positioning the farm for ongoing success.

Researcher and psychologist Gail Matthews discovered that people are 42 per cent more likely to accomplish their goals if they write them down. Written goals provide you with a sense of direction and motivation, a way to prioritize, and of course, measure progress. Written goals help you to stay focused on achieving your objectives.

The next piece of the puzzle: Set goals that are clear and actionable. The SMART framework will help.

SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. This framework helps ensure your goals are not just dreams or wishes, but can be realized.

Here are some specific examples of how to apply SMART goals in farming:

**Specific:** Instead of a somewhat vague goal like "improve crop yield," a SMART goal specifies exactly what yield increase you are aiming for. For example, "Increase our canola yield by 10 per cent."

**Measurable:** Measurable goals help you track your progress and adjust your efforts accordingly. In the example of increasing your canola yield, what measures can you put in place to track your yield towards achieving a 10 per cent increase?

Achievable: Your goals must be realistic, based on available resources and expertise. Resources can include your inputs, equipment and, of course, people. Is increasing your yield by 10 per cent feasible? How so? Better inputs? Equipment? Agronomists? Having achievable goals is important for preventing frustration, disappointment and burnout within the team.

**Relevant:** Focusing on goals that align with your farm's overall vision and mission will help gain buy-in from members of the farm team, including family, employees and even external advisors. Having relevant goals ensures your efforts contribute to your broader business objectives and everyone feels good about their role in achieving these goals. Farm Management Canada develops and delivers leading-edge resources, information and tools to support farm business success. Visit fmc-gac.com. **Time-bound:** Setting a deadline keeps the farm team motivated and focused, ensuring that goals are met within a reasonable time frame. When will you achieve a 10 per cent increase in yield? Perhaps by the end of this growing season, or even more precise – by September 30!

Having SMART goals also provides an opportunity to celebrate your success and everyone's part in achieving the goal – something we don't do enough in farming! So, at the end of the growing season, take stock of your yield, and throw a team appreciation event to celebrate your accomplishments.

Even if you do not achieve your goal, it's an opportunity to revisit the SMART framework and refine your goals going forward. Perhaps your goal wasn't as achievable as you first thought and needs to be adjusted. Or perhaps there were mitigating circumstances, and the goal can be kept for next year.

### A crucial part of farm business management is analyzing your current situation, identifying key areas for improvement, and breaking these down into manageable, trackable steps.

A crucial part of farm business management is analyzing your current situation, identifying key areas for improvement, and breaking these down into manageable, trackable steps. Using the SMART goal framework will help set realistic goals, enhance decision-making, and over time build confidence and farm team harmony, working together for the success of the operation and everyone involved.

**One last tip:** Ensure all relevant parties (e.g., family, the farm team, external advisors, etc.) are involved in the creation of goals to ensure the farm and its people have the capacity to achieve the goals. This also helps to motivate your team towards achieving the goals.

*—Heather Watson is executive director of Farm Management Canada, based on Ottawa.* 

# **clean**farms

# Need a better way to manage used grain bags and baler twine? **Recycle them!**

### **Recycle Grain Bags**

**ROLL** – roll tightly with a mechanical grain bag roller or old hay baler, secure with twine. Contact local collection site or municipality to ask if a roller is available.

**RETURN** – contact collection site prior to dropping off material for rolling/drop off information.

Cleanfarms operates the Alberta Ag-Plastic. Recycle It! pilot program to help Alberta farmers improve sustainability by recycling baler twine and grain bags. For more about Alberta Ag-Plastic. Recycle It! - go to AlbertaAgPlastics.ca

### **Recycle Baler Twine**

BAG – get a free recycling bag from a participating collection site and fill with used plastic baler twine.

**RETURN**<sup>\*</sup> – close top of bag and bring back to the collection site.

\*Netting/net wrap is not accepted for recycling for technical reasons. If added, the whole bag will be unrecyclable.



Alberta

The pilot project is led by the multi-stakeholder Agricultural Plastics Recycling Group; funds were granted by the Government of Alberta and are dministered by Alberta Beef Producers.



SCAN ME

### **Cleanfarms.ca**

info@cleanfarms.ca 

Find a collection location near you at csmap.cleanfarms.ca/FindMap

# Canadian Canola explores the world

Our hero 'Canadian Canola' is back in action, exploring the world of canola in 10 new videos to drive awareness and engagement with millennials.

### Life is a beach! Well, it is for 'Canadian

**Canola',** who soaked up the sun and sand in Mexico to showcase canola as an ingredient in sunscreen. As the Hello Canola campaign enters year two, the goal remains to increase awareness of canola, spark engagement and ultimately turn apathy to love among Canadian millennials aged 25-49 who live in densely populated areas of English-speaking Canada. So that means videos and social media!

'Canadian Canola' will be a core element of year two activities, with the character starring in 10 short videos that highlight how canola is used around the world.

### 1

Canadian Canola strolls the beach in Mexico to showcase canola usage in sunscreen.

← Canadian Canola takes a swim to talk about canola's role in aquaculture fisheries around the globe.

### Themes for the other eight videos include:

- Canola at the dog park showcasing its use in pet food
- Canola on a cargo ship coming into an international port speaking to the crop's exports
- Beekeeping canola, highlighting its importance for the bee population by engaging with beekeepers in suits as she says, "hey, should I have one of those?"
- Canola running an international marathon to showcase its health benefits
- Canola in the front row at Fashion Week to showcase the crop's versatility in beauty
- Canola at an air show in the U.S. speaking to its use in sustainable aviation fuel
- Canola in the pits at Montreal Grand Prix, highlighting its use in biofuel
- Canola at a busy Japanese night market to highlight the oil's use in international cuisine

To watch these videos as they roll out, follow **@HelloCanola** on Pinterest and **@Hello\_Canola** on Facebook and Instagram. And encourage your city-dwelling friends and family to do the same!

—The National Canola Marketing Program (NCMP) is a partnership of SaskOilseeds, Alberta Canola and Manitoba Canola Growers. To catch up on the campaign and its tactics and messages, please visit hellocanola.ca.

# Asteroid incoming

What are you worried could have a major impact on the farm business in the near future? And how will you plan for that "asteroid strike"? This is how our six farmer panelists answered those questions.

BY JAY WHETTER

### **Owen Orsak**

### Binscarth, Manitoba

"Plan A isn't important. Plan B is important," says Owen Orsak. "When was the last time Plan A worked in farming? Contingency planning is key. We need a strategy for when things don't work."

While Orsak can provide a long list of impacts, one big one for him is labour. He just hired a new employee at \$30 per hour.

The issue, Orsak says, is that \$30 won't be enough to keep him long term. With four mines in the area, farms have to pay a lot more to compete for labour. He also knows of another farm in southwest Saskatchewan that offered \$45 per hour and can't get anyone to move to his remote location.

"Farm labour issues get talked about to death because they're serious," Orsak says.

So Plan B is to do more with fewer people. On the day we talked, Orsak was in the middle of harvest and also hauling 2023 canola to the nearby processing facility at Harrowby. "We used to have a 10 inch auger, tandem truck and small bins. Now I have a 13 inch auger, Super B truck, big bins and a camera. I can haul grain efficiently on my own." The camera allows him to see where to move the truck while sitting in the driver's seat.

Farmers also buy higher efficiency drills, bigger sprayers and combines – all so they can do more with less labour. Next is autonomy. "I'm excited for it, but we're not there yet."



### Jonah McGrath

#### Leroy, Saskatchewan

ow will farms harvest when all the older farmers are no longer able to work? Jonah McGrath's dad and uncle are "out there every day busting their humps" and are the 'backbone of the operation," he says.

McGrath, like most farmers, runs a skeleton crew at peak times like harvest and seeding. "We can't have any injuries or have anyone call in sick or go to the lake because it means a million dollar combine sits idle," he says.

But finding people to work 18 days in the fall and 12 days in the spring gets harder and harder – even when farms are paying them more per hour than they've ever made in their lives, McGrath says. "I go into the coffee shop to recruit and all the retired guys, the best of the best, are spoken for," he says. And as we lose these retired farmers, not enough new retirees or young people are entering the market to fill the void.

"You can't put just anyone into the cab of combine," he says.

One solution, McGrath says, is to reintroduce agriculture into public schools. Show students in towns and cities, students without an agriculture background, about the opportunities in agriculture and train them for a few key jobs, like how to run a combine. "Farm labour issues get talked about to death because they're serious."

-Owen Orsak

### "I go into the coffee shop to recruit and all the retired guys, the best of the best, are spoken for."

-Jonah McGrath

"While these policy and market changes are frustrating, I believe it's important to get involved."

-Andrea De Roo



### Andrea De Roo

### Fairlight, Saskatchewan

The De Roo family reviews the farm's strategic plan every January, and they always discuss how markets and policy changes could affect the business. "Policy and markets always remain the top two concerns as we as farmers often have to adjust reactively not proactively," De Roo says. With the strategic planning, they try to be as proactive as possible.

De Roo can think of numerous political and policy events that have affected their business. The federal government's voluntary target to reduce nitrogen emissions by 30 per cent. "Unrealistic," she says. Rail strikes that hurt Canada's reputation as a reliable supplier. And high level disputes with China that always seem to create a trade disruption for canola.

By getting involved, farmers have a least some influence on policy outcomes. "While these policy and market changes are frustrating, I believe it's important to get involved – whether it's local politics, commission groups or federal government." Her two terms with the Canadian Agricultural Youth Council ended in September, and she will be looking at the next opportunity.



### Amanda and **Curt Hazlett**

### **Red Deer. Alberta**

" ur biggest concern is drought," says Amanda. "This is our third consecutive year of drought conditions."

In 2023, they didn't get a lot of rain, but "it came at just the right time," Curt says.

Their barley yielded 150 bu./ac. in 2023, and "saved our bacon last year," Amanda says. "This year, nothing is in the spotlight."

No rains came when they needed it, and a lot of the moisture came as hail. However, after an extremely dry year, it was raining the day of this interview in late August - in the middle of harvest. "The irony is not lost on me," Amanda says. "That would have been great in mid June."

The Hazletts farm in an area where farmers, including them, use tillage to manage what is usually fairly heavy crop residue. "Field areas with lots of trash also tend to have way worse frost damage," Curt says. But last fall, they forgot to cultivate two fields and this spring, those fields had fewer weeds and more soil moisture reserves. The results inspired them. "We are not likely to do any fall tillage this year," Curt says. He is somewhat comforted by his observation that "as things are changing, spring frost seems to be less of an issue."

If they lived farther south and had big flat fields, they would look into irrigation. "But our ground isn't flat enough and our fields aren't square enough for pivots," Curt says, "so for us, the key is soil management practices to conserve moisture."



### **Jennie Parsonage**

### Baldur, Manitoba

"Our biggest

drought. This

is our third

consecutive

conditions."

-Amanda Hazlett

"We've got

our fingers in

which takes

-Jennie Parsonage

different things,

some pressure off

farm cash flow."

year of drought

concern is

eather volatility and market volatility are top of mind for Jennie Parsonage, who is part of three businesses - farming with her siblings, farming with her husband and his family, and an aerial spraying company.

Parsonage and her three siblings all have some sort of off-farm household income. "We've got our fingers in different things," she says, which takes some pressure off farm cash flow.

The aerial spraying business is somewhat more protected from weather volatility. "Generally, if the farm is doing well, the aerial spraying business is doing well, but the aerial business covers a wider geographic area, which makes it more consistent than the farm," Parsonage says. "If the farm is dry, there is usually some area where yields are better and people are spraying more."

On the farm she runs with her siblings, they grow six crops in general, and four in a given year. The crops are canola, soybeans, sunflowers, wheat, barley and oats. The family tries to forward-contract up to 50 per cent of historic yield, to take advantage of good price points before or while the crop is in production. "That way we're not having to sell off the combine," Parsonage says. They also keep good cost-of-production records so they always know the break even price for each crop.

They are looking at other contract tools, like call and put options to 'systematically hedge," but Parsonage knows of some farmers who tried this and eventually stopped.



### **Ryan Gauthier**

### Donnelly, Alberta

hen Ryan Gauthier heard the question, there was a sigh, a long pause, then "so many things", and another sigh.

For him the biggest issue, among many, is the cost of inputs compared to the price of grain. "This year is a prime example. Grain prices are down and nothing else went down with them," he says. "Some days it seems you need 100 bu./ac. wheat and 60 bu./ac. canola for it to pencil out."

Gauthier recently hired a marketer to capture "relatively decent crop prices so we're not leaving opportunities on the table."

The farm also uses Cargill's MarketSense program to keep a running total of expenses per field or per acre. The program helps them analyze each decision, showing how it affects profitability based on yield potential. "We know whether to throttle up or throttle down," he says.

This is a family tradition. Even before the apps, Gauthier's grandfather would do it old school, keeping a tally of expenses and profitability with his pencil and notebook. Gauthier sees great value in this practice, especially with margins tighter than ever. 🙁

—Iav Whetter is the editor of Canola Digest.

"Some days it seems you need 100 bu./ac. wheat and 60 bu./ac. canola for it to pencil out." -Ryan Gauthier

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- Straight cut harvest option

**CS3300** TF

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- Early maturity



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\*\*No purchase necessary. Contest begins on July 16, 2024 at 12:00 a.m. and ends on November 14, 2024 at 11:59 a.m. (CDT). There are a total of 6 prizes available to be won of up to 16 bags of canola seed (valued at up to approximately \$13,500). Skill-testing question required. Open to farmers in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, who are age of majority in the province at time of entry. Odds of winning depend on number of eligible entries received before contest closes. Limit one entry per person. Full rules and entry details available at: canterra.com/freesedfridays. | Always read and follow insect resistance management requirements (where applicable), grain marketing and all other stewardship practices and pesticide label directions. Scan the QR code or visit traits.bayer.ca/en/product-legal to review important stewardship and product information including regulatory status, grain marketing requirements, herbicide and insect tolerance, pesticide use and product trial results. Roundup Ready<sup>®</sup> and Truftex<sup>®</sup> are trademarks of Baye Forup. Used under license. © 2024 Bayer Group. All rights reserved. | LibertyLink<sup>®</sup> and the Water Droplet Design are registered trademarks of BASF. Used under license. © 2024 Bayer Group. All rights reserved. | LibertyLink<sup>®</sup> and the Water Droplet Design are registered trademarks of BASF. Used under license. © 2024 Syngenta.

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