

March 2021

# canola DIGEST

The Source for Canada's  
Canola Growers

## Crowd-sourced plant counts

A CCC priority for 2021 is to have farmers assess their canola establishment. Get the whole family counting and enter your results into the survey tool at [canolacalculator.ca](https://canolacalculator.ca). / PAGE 16

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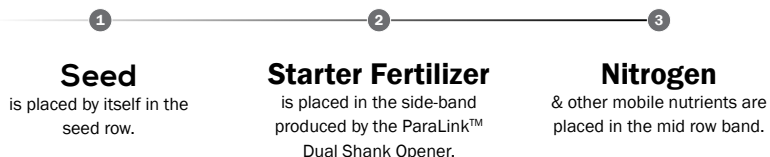


# SEIZE

the Power of Placement.



The TriMax™ Triple-Shoot System is comprised of three different air streams in combination with the NEW 3330SE or 3335QDA ParaLink™ Dual Shank Opener (PLD) & Mid Row Banders®.



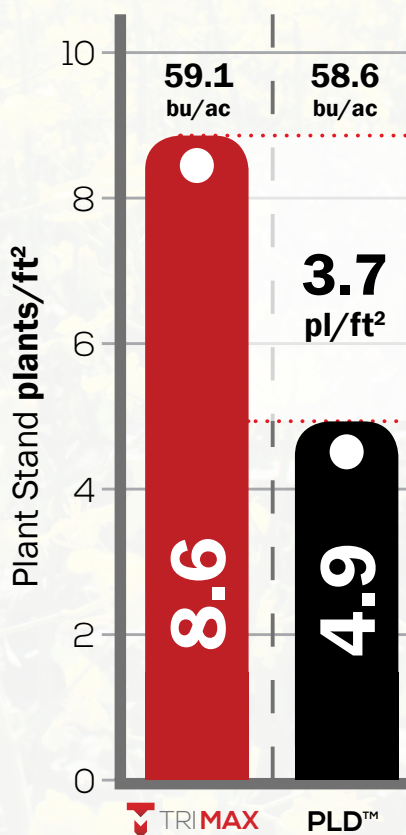
If simply moving your nitrogen fertilizer from the side-band to the mid row meant a 75% increase in plant stand, would you make the move?

Over the past 4 years Bourgault has observed significant plant stand differences between the TriMax™ Triple-Shoot System and dual shank seeding systems.

In this example, knowing you could increase establishment with the TriMax™ System, the seed rate could have been reduced by 42% to produce 5 plants per square foot resulting in a savings of \$30 per acre.

**At what cost to your livelihood are you ignoring the facts?**

## 2020 CANOLA TRIALS



# 75%

increase in plant stand with the Bourgault TriMax™ System vs the ParaLink™ Dual Shank System

### TRI MAX

ParaLink™ Dual Shank (PLD™ & MRBs®)

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1 <b>Seed Row</b>     | Canola 5.6 lb/ac   |
| 2 <b>Side-Band</b>    | Phosphate 50 lb/ac<br>Nitrogen 10 lb/ac (with Phos.)<br>Potassium 10 lb/ac |
| 3 <b>Mid Row Band</b> | Nitrogen 130 lb/ac   |

### ParaLink™ Dual Shank (PLD™ Only)

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 <b>Seed Row</b>  | Canola 5.6 lb/ac   |
| 2 <b>Side-Band</b> | Phosphate 50 lb/ac<br>Potassium 10 lb/ac<br>Nitrogen 140 lb/ac |

**SEIZE** the Power of Placement. **REAP** the Rewards.

For more information on this year's canola trials visit: [www.bourgault.com](http://www.bourgault.com)





## FEATURES



## CANOLA OUTLOOK FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

Global demand for plant-based oil and protein meal keeps growing, and Canadian canola has a good fit within these markets – as long as market access remains open. The CCC says trade barriers around the world still present big challenges for Canadian canola exports.



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Will you make any adjustments to improve nutrient use efficiency in 2021? In this article, farmer Doug Hofmann and agronomist Sara Lemmerich discuss their standard 4R strategies and new objectives for this year.

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### 4R highlights from Canola Discovery Forum

Canola Discovery Forum 2020, held online in December, had a 4R fertilizer management theme. A panel discussion shared tips and described why 4R principles – Right Product at the Right Rate, Right Time and Right Place – are important.

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### CCC hosts virtual trade mission

With travel restrictions due to COVID-19, how do you do a trade mission? Virtually, of course. The Canola Council of Canada held its first online trade mission, hosting a South Korean delegation on January 11.



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The Canola Council of Canada agronomy specialists will encourage growers to select the best hybrids for each field, increase adoption of 4R fertilizer management, improve their in-field diagnostics of disease threats, and try the new Canola Calculator tools for plant counts and harvest loss measurement.

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### 18 **Farmer panel** What sustainability means to me

The conversation about sustainable farm production practices will continue to gain steam in Canada and around the world as people put more focus on how humans are treating the planet. While the objectives may seem unclear at times, the topic cannot be avoided. Our four panelists talk about sustainability, what it means to them and what they do on their farms to be sustainable.

### 26 **Canola Research Hub** Highlights from plant establishment research

This article provides a quick summary of research results that could influence your canola stand establishment objectives for 2021. Find more information or specific details on each study, check out the redesigned Canola Research Hub at [canolaresearch.ca](http://canolaresearch.ca).

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Canada's Agriculture Day was February 23, and it gave all Canadians a chance to recognize the work our farmers do to provide a reliable supply of healthy, safe food. Canola Eat Well used the day to launch a video on sustainable canola farming.

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Alberta Canola welcomes new board members and says farewell to chair John Guelly. Also, a reminder that part of your levy payment qualifies for SR&ED tax credit.



### 6 **SaskCanola**

Research continues to be a strategic priority at SaskCanola, with about 40 per cent of its annual budget allocated to this pillar. See the bulletin for new projects. SaskCanola also supports a new diabetes strategy through Canola Eat Well.

### 8 **Manitoba Canola Growers**

Brian Chorney has been presented with the Manitoba Canola Growers 2021 Canola Award of Excellence. Manitoba high school students graduating in 2021 can apply for a Manitoba Canola Growers scholarship.

## CALENDAR

### CANOLA COUNCIL OF CANADA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ONLINE – Thursday, March 18, 2021  
[canolacouncil.org/events](http://canolacouncil.org/events)



Photo: iStock.com/BrianAJackson





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## THE EDITOR'S DESK



# Consumers R Us

**I** made vegan burgers for the first time ever. I'm not vegan, I'm not vegetarian, but these vegan burgers were right up my alley. They had wheat, oats, lentils and mushrooms – all of which were sourced from Western Canadian farms – and I wanted to try something different. I eat a diverse diet that includes meat, dairy, eggs, fruits and vegetables of various colours, so much starch, pulses galore, ground flaxseed and canola oil. I think about Canada's Food Guide and the half-my-plate vegetable objective, but I'm not even close on that score. I read labels like a weirdo, but I don't read labels on my chips, pizza, Joe Louises and beer. Yeah, I'm a messed up consumer – and there are 7.8 billion of us.

We hear time and again that every farmer is different, and of course that's true. So is every consumer. Consumers are quirky, unique and baffling in their decision-making, but in that chaos are trends. These days, all of us question-asking, healthy-minded-but-not-always-healthy-eating experimenters are stuck together on a cruise ship to Port How-was-that-grown.

Mike von Massow is a food economics prof at the University of Guelph and every year he posts a Trends Report at [foodfocusguelph.ca](http://foodfocusguelph.ca). I gave von Massow a call to ask what he thought about my premise for this article: to understand consumers we first need to understand ourselves. He leapt right into a story about a presentation he made at a Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association meeting in Swift Current. A producer asked him, "Why won't consumers just listen to the science and trust us?" Without missing a beat, von Massow asked the producer what truck he drives? And the truck before that? And the truck before that? And what colour of equipment do you have? Is it all the same colour? Then he said, "OK, show me the science you used to guide those decisions?"

Our decisions are often based on opinions and feelings, not science. That is why consumers are not always predictable or consistent. Some want

this. Some want that. Some want this and that. And that is why we have so much choice. "Food stores offer far more choice now – but it's not because we as individuals want more choice, it's because we all want different things," von Massow says.

This is a positive for farmers. "Within the population, groups of consumers are giving farmers the choice whether to meet their demands," he says. "They're not telling farmers how to farm. They're saying, 'This is what we want'." Farmers can decide if they want to give it to them.

One demand that's on the rise, according to von Massow's trend analysis, is holistic eating. Consumers are making choices based not only on their own health, but also on the impact those choices have on the environment. "I wouldn't be surprised if we start to see food companies make claims about wetlands, ecosystems and soil health," he says.

So how does a farmer keep up? Talk to the companies that buy crops and livestock. Ask what they're hearing from the people up the chain of command in their company. Ask about specialized opportunities for this year or in the future. Ask about contracts. In the end, it's pretty simple. Farmers keep up with consumer demand trends by going through these questions every year with every buyer.

"Markets send pretty clear signals to us," von Massow says. "If you can sign a contract for it, then that's what the market wants."

There are many millions of consumers around the world who want and will keep buying Canadian canola oil and meal, the same way that farmers will keep buying the same colour of combine and the same brand of truck, but even loyal customers make demands. Out of the blue they'll ask for four doors instead of two, for Bluetooth linkage to their phone instead of a CD player, for an electric engine instead of diesel, and we'll come to realize that what they want today is quite a bit different from what they asked for 20 years ago. Consumers are like that. We are consumers. So we are like that. 🌻





## Alberta Canola Producers Commission 2021 Board of Directors

The 31st Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Canola Producers Commission was held online on January 26, 2021. Following the Annual General Meeting, the board elected Kevin Serfas from Turin as the new chair, and Roger Chevrax of Killam as the new vice chair.

Alberta Canola is pleased to welcome a new director to the board. Justin Nanninga from Neerlandia, Alberta was elected by acclamation to represent Alberta Canola's Region 5.

The board of Alberta Canola would like to thank outgoing Region 5 director John Guelly for all the hard work he has done on behalf of Alberta's canola farmers.

John joined the board in 2015 and served on a variety of committees, including time as chair of the research committee and the governance & finance committee. John also served as vice chair for one year and as board chair for two years.

Visit [albertacanola.com](http://albertacanola.com) for more information on the board of directors, the committees that guide the board and Alberta Canola's regions.



*Kevin Serfas*



*Roger Chevrax*

### 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Region 1:** Dan Doll, Fairview

**Region 2:** Andre Harpe, Valhalla Centre

**Region 3:** Denis Guindon, Falher

**Region 4:** John Mayko, Mundare

**Region 5:** Justin Nanninga, Neerlandia

**Region 6:** Wayne Schneider, Nisku

**Region 7:** Mike Ammeter, Sylvan Lake

**Region 8:** Ian Chitwood, Airdrie

**Region 9:** Kevin Serfas, Turin

**Region 10:** Cale Staden, Vermilion

**Region 11:** Roger Chevrax, Killam

**Region 12:** Holly White, Rolling Hills

## Thank you to John Guelly



Alberta Canola would like to thank outgoing director John Guelly for all the hard work he has done on behalf of Alberta's canola farmers.

John joined the board in 2015 and held many positions including chair of the research committee and later the governance & finance committee. John also served as vice chair for one year and as board chair for two years.

John represented Alberta Canola on the Board of the Western Canadian Canola/Rapeseed Recommending Committee, the Governance Committee of the Canola Performance Trials, the Alberta Clubroot Management Committee, the Canola Council of Canada Blackleg and Clubroot Steering Committees and the National Canola Eat Well Steering Committee.

John's steady hand at the helm and

his unflappable demeanor helped him get through numerous media interviews and presentations to government advocating on behalf of farmers, especially during the "Harvest from Hell", a phrase from his speaking notes that Karla Bergstrom helped write went viral when he described the horrific conditions farmers across Alberta were experiencing in the fall of 2019.

John's dedication and passion for speaking out about clubroot helped raised the awareness of the rapidly spreading disease to many canola growing farmers and alerted them to new ways of managing the impact of the disease on their farms.

Once again, the board would like to thank John for his service and dedication, and a special thank you to his family for sharing him for the advancement of our remarkable industry. All the best in the future!



# Tax Credit for the 2020 Tax Year Open to Canola Farmers in Alberta

Canola growers in Alberta that do not request a refund of their check off from the Alberta Canola Producers Commission qualify for a tax credit for the 2020 tax year.

The Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credit allows canola growers to claim the tax credit for that portion of the check off paid that was used to fund qualifying research.

“The tax credit is an additional benefit for growers who pay check-off on crops like canola”, says John Mayko a farmer from Mundare, and the chair of Alberta Canola’s research committee. “Farmers are funding research into finding agronomic solutions for growing canola and human nutritional research to help grow market demand. The SR&ED tax credits allows farmers to capture some of that investment back at tax time.”

**The rate for Alberta canola producers in 2020 is 21.30 per cent.** For example, for an individual grower that paid \$1000.00 in check off to the Alberta Canola in 2020, \$213.00 is eligible to earn the tax credit.

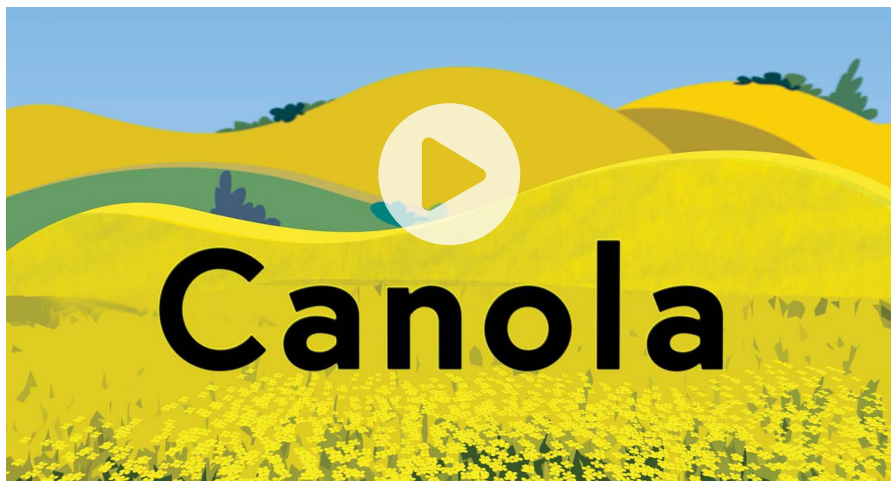
## THE TAX CREDIT CAN:

- offset federal taxes owing in the current year,
- be received as a tax refund,
- be carried forward up to 10 years to offset federal taxes owing, or
- be carried back 3 years to reduce federal taxes paid in those years.
- Individual producers must file a T2038 (IND). Farm corporations must file form T2SCH31.

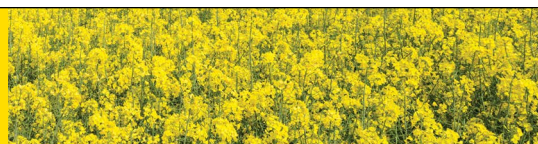
Historical SR&ED percentages for Alberta Canola and links to more information from the Canada Revenue Agency can be found at [albertacanola.com/SRED](http://albertacanola.com/SRED).

## New Canola Production Video for Students

In the fall, Alberta Canola launched a terrific and short infographic animation on canola production, geared for upper elementary and junior high students in both English and French. The video can be watched on [learncanola.com/canola](http://learncanola.com/canola).







## New Research Projects Contribute to Grower Profitability

At SaskCanola, research continues to be a strategic priority, with about 40 per cent of SaskCanola's annual budget allocated to this pillar. Since the establishment of SaskCanola in 1991, Saskatchewan canola producers have funded over 426 studies related to canola agronomy, trait development, alternative uses and more, with the goal to improve canola profitability.

### WHY IS RESEARCH IMPORTANT TO FARMERS?

**For one, it gives growers a competitive edge.** Research is essential to stay competitive in the global oilseed market and keep ahead of canola threats such as diseases and abiotic stress. Where would we be as an industry without several decades of blackleg research?

**Research initiatives make levy dollars go farther because growers can access matching funds.** Governments and other funding entities provide capital that exceeds the amount levies bring to the research program. We increase growers' investment by leveraging levy money an average of 3:1 with co-funders.

**Projects can generate and strengthen producer group partnerships.** We create partnerships with other canola producer groups in Western Canada and sometimes other Saskatchewan commodity groups to share the cost of research. This ensures levy dollars work together to solve whole farm integrated producer issues.

**Research initiatives support producer-identified issues.** Growers are given the opportunity to provide direct input into research priorities to ensure investments are beneficial to their farm operation. At times, SaskCanola funds projects because producers need answers – it may not attract other funding contributors but we believe it is necessary to get it done, so full funding is provided.

### NEW PROJECTS

Eight newly funded Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) projects were announced on January 12. The projects and their implications for growers are:

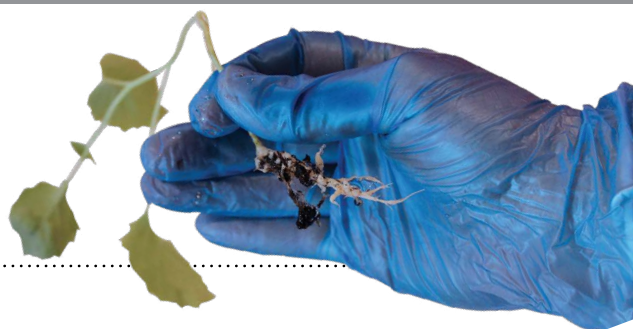
- **Impact of Phosphorus Fertilizer Forms on Nutrition of Wheat, Pea and Canola, Soil Fate and Losses in Run-Off Water** – This project will assess how phosphorus fertilizer forms, placement and rate affect crop responses, fate in the soil and run-off losses in Saskatchewan soils.
- **Identification and exploitation of genome structural variants for trait improvement in Prairie crops** – This builds on our understanding of the development of canola (*Brassica napus*) and wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.) pan-genome structural variant (PanSV) atlases.
- **Developing single-spore isolates of pathotypes of *Plasmodiophora brassicae*** – Researchers will develop techniques for whole-genome sequencing of single spores of *Plasmodiophora brassicae*.
- **Shining Light on Digital Agriculture: Linking Soil NIR measurements, Fertility and Crop Yields** – This project will use spectral sensing to produce spatially-resolved soil-based yield potential maps, and will develop methodology to link field near infrared (NIR) data and laboratory analyses.
- **Enhancing the Saskatchewan Soil Health Assessment Protocol – Phase 2** – This will build on the Saskatchewan Soil Health Testing Protocol so that it outputs soil zone-specific scores, incorporates novel microbial measurements of soil health, and explores early-indicators of

soil health change for when producers incorporate regenerative agricultural practices on farm.

- **Collecting the carbon data needed for Climate-Smart agriculture in Saskatchewan** – Researchers will provide direct, year-round field-scale measurements of greenhouse gas emissions from a representative cropping system in Saskatchewan, and test the hypothesis that Saskatchewan cropping systems are a net carbon sink by determining net ecosystem exchange and carbon footprint.







- **Application of hyperspectral imaging for detection and mapping of small patch clubroot infestations in commercial canola fields** – This study focuses on identifying readily applied diagnostic features for mapping small clubroot patches and developing a diagnostic tool for identifying small patch clubroot infestations.
- **Continuing to watch the winds: the origin and arrival of migrant aster leafhoppers and diamondback moths** – Researchers will assess the genetic variations of migrant and new generations of diamondback moth and aster leafhopper to pinpoint their southern origins. They will use wind trajectories and stable isotopes to continue gathering data on diamondback moth and aster leafhopper migration flights and origin.

SaskCanola research results are posted to our online database. Both short and long reports are available. For more information, contact Doug Heath, research manager, at (306) 975-0730/[dheath@saskcanola.com](mailto:dheath@saskcanola.com), or Miki Miheguli, research extension specialist, at (306) 975-0273/[mmiheguli@saskcanola.com](mailto:mmiheguli@saskcanola.com).

*Micrometeorological station for direct measurement of the carbon footprint of cropping systems in Saskatchewan.*

## Canola Oil: A healthy fat for diabetic meal planning



For anyone newly diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, healthy living and nutrition is an integral part of managing their disease. Unfortunately, the process of modifying food intake can be overwhelming and oftentimes stressful. While it is always recommended to consult a doctor, certified diabetes educator or registered dietitian to develop a personal plan, now more than ever, due to COVID-19, the wait time to see those professionals can be long and leave those who are newly diagnosed unsure of what they can eat in the meantime.

With the financial help of Canola Eat Well ([canolaeatwell.com](http://canolaeatwell.com)), Diabetes Canada developed a new strategy to support this transition through the 7-Day Meal Plan. The plans provide a step-by-step guide to help people achieve nutritionally balanced and delicious meals, all under a healthy 1,500-calorie daily intake. Depending on personal goals and lifestyle, calories and carbohydrates can be adjusted higher or lower to provide the optimal number of snacks or portion sizes. The meal plans are a great way to guide people in consuming regular and nutritious amounts of food, while keep blood glucose levels within normal range.

The 7-Day Meal Plans were specifically created to feature diabetes-friendly foods and recipes, such as low glycemic index carbohydrates and lean protein, as well as healthy fats like canola oil. The carbohydrates are balanced throughout the day with each meal containing 30-45 grams of net carbohydrates and snacks containing around 15 grams of carbohydrates. Each month a new 7-Day Meal Plan will be released on the Diabetes Canada website to meet personal dietary patterns such as vegetarian, gluten-free and low carbohydrate diets. For more information, see the Diabetes Canada website [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca).

–Lynn Weaver, RD, PHEC, canola promotion manager with Canola Eat Well.

**DIABETES  
CANADA**





## Former MCGA Director receives 2021 Canola Award of Excellence



Each year, the Manitoba Canola Growers Association (MCGA) recognizes the accomplishments of an individual or organization for their contributions to the sustained growth and prosperity of Manitoba's canola industry, with the Canola Award of Excellence. Former MCGA director and farmer Brian Chorney has been presented the 2021 Canola Award of Excellence.

Brian has been actively involved within canola organizations and renewable fuel organizations, which has led to the development and growth of canola-based biodiesel demand in Manitoba and Canada.

"Brian was instrumental in policy development for the biodiesel industry at both the provincial and national level," says Rick White, president and CEO of the Canadian Canola Growers Association (CCGA). "He was heavily involved in the development of federal government programs such as the EcoEnergy Program and the EcoABC program, and was a strong and effective advocate in the establishment of early biodiesel mandates. Brian was an absolute pleasure to work with and brought the influential farmer voice to the table with knowledge, passion and professionalism. His pioneering efforts on the creation of the industry and the benefits to Canadian farmers continues to this day."

In 2003, Brian was appointed to the first board of directors for the Biodiesel Association of Canada where he appeared as a witness in front of several government committees advocating for canola-based biodiesel legislation and program development.

**"Thank you for this special recognition. I accept it on behalf of a team that has worked and continues to work tirelessly to improve the viability of canola production in Canada."**

—Brian Chorney



## STAY CONNECTED.

Sign up for our Canola Crush Newsletter today! Visit [www.CanolaGrowers.com](http://www.CanolaGrowers.com)



The recent biodiesel requirement increase from two to five per cent raises the floor on biodiesel inclusion in Manitoba.

“For canola farmers this is a good news story. It points the future direction nationwide for higher minimum canola demand,” says Clayton Harder, chair of MCGA. “Brian’s strong analytical approach and focused efforts have helped steer this outcome in the canola farmers’ favour. Through Brian’s efforts at the Canola Council and multiple provincial and federal meetings with officials, this new higher biodiesel mandate is a win for Manitoba farmers.”

Brian was a director on the MCGA board for 14 years holding various executive positions and contributing to committees including Biodiesel, Research, Canola Performance Trials, Communications and Member Relations. He brought a strong farmer voice to his extended board roles sitting on the CCGA, Canola Council of Canada, Biodiesel Association of Canada and Canadian Renewable Fuels Association boards.

“I was humbled to be recognized with the Canola Award of Excellence. Everything I was involved with within canola and renewable fuel organizations was a team effort. I thank all my fellow board members and association staff members for their support over the years,” says Chorney. “We may have not done everything right along the way, but I believe we have helped increase the viability of canola production in Canada.”

Brian earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Manitoba. He manages a farm near East Selkirk along with his wife Brenda, son-in-law Kyle, his cousin Murray and his nephew Brad. Brian enjoys snowmobiling in the winter, and spending his summers at the cottage fishing, boating, water skiing, and enjoying dock time with family and friends.

The Manitoba Canola Growers would like to thank Brian for his contributions to the biodiesel industry and the sustained growth and prosperity of Manitoba’s canola industry.

## Graduating from High School?



**APPLY FOR THE  
Manitoba Canola  
Growers Scholarship!**

If you’re a Manitoba high school student graduating in 2021, then you may qualify to earn a \$1000 post-secondary scholarship from Manitoba Canola Growers.

To be eligible, you must:

- > **Be from a farm that is a member of the Manitoba Canola Growers Association.**
- > **Plan on attending a Canadian post-secondary institution within two years of graduation.**
- > **Send your complete application to MCGA by April 2, 2021.**

The awarding of the scholarship will be based on academics, canola connection, school and community involvement, and essay submission.



Manitoba  
Canola Growers

For an application form and complete details, visit  
[CanolaGrowers.com](http://CanolaGrowers.com)





Global demand for plant-based oil and protein meal keeps growing, and Canadian canola has a good fit within these markets – as long as market access remains open.

# CANOLA OUTLOOK FOR 2021 AND BEYOND



BY JAY WHETTER

**G**lobal demand for vegetable oil and plant-based protein sources remains strong. Meanwhile, global canola market share is declining, and potential for increased protectionism presents a risk for Canadian canola exports. This article will provide a brief glimpse into these topics.

First, some facts on yield. Canadian canola yields averaged 40.1 bu./ac. in 2020, which was the lowest for the past five years. The Canola Council of Canada (CCC) goal of 52 bu./ac. average yields by 2025 is getting farther away while the years click along, yet CCC agronomy director Clint Jurke believes that yields could improve by 25 per cent over the next five years.

That's because canola yields are showing healthy signs of growth. Despite flat results for the past five years, the average of 41.1 bu./ac. for 2016-20 represents a large jump from the average of 35.3 bu./ac. for 2011-15. Results for the past five years are also more consistent – the range of 40.1 to 42.3 through that period compares favourably to the range of 27.9 to 40.2 for 2011-15. This recent stretch of fairly consistent results, despite some poor growing conditions, suggests improved resiliency from genetics and agronomic practices. "This should prepare the crop for another threshold leap over the next five years," Jurke says.

An extensive canola grower survey, conducted in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba in late 2020, will help identify those productivity challenges that are having the biggest effect on yield and profitability. Results from the survey should help Canadian canola growers identify pathways to improve on both counts, and help Canada reach its canola market potential.

## DEMAND RISING

The Canadian canola industry yield goal was launched in 2014 based on trends pointing to a potential market for 26 million tonnes of Canadian canola by 2025. Global demand for oilseeds still supports this market projection, helped along by increased interest in biofuels and plant-based proteins.

Global vegetable meal demand growth suffered a blip recently, but this is correcting. To specify, Thomas Mielke,

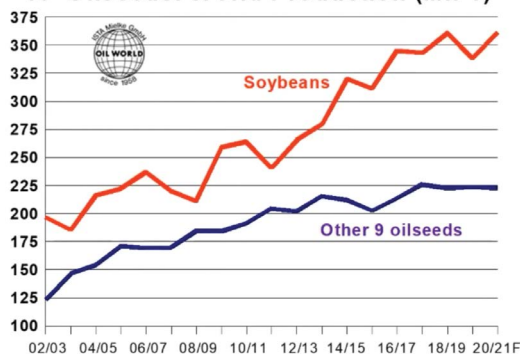
executive director of ISTA Mielke and publisher of Oil World, says Chinese pork production is back on track after a major African swine fever outbreak in 2018-19. The result is a rebound in global demand for vegetable meal. Demand for vegetable oil also continues strong. This is why global productivity challenges for oil and meal crops in 2020 in many parts of the world, including Canada, resulted in tight supplies and a rise in prices over the past few months.

Looking more closely at supply and demand trends reveals a throwing-down-of-the-gauntlet for canola. Can Canada and other canola/rapeseed producing regions regain market share lost to soybeans? Mielke says the big picture shows that global dependence on soybean oil and meal is increasing due to insufficient supplies of other oilseeds. "During the past five years, soybeans accounted for 77 per cent of the increase in world crushings of all oilseeds," he says. (See the graph.) "In the years ahead, the prospective slowing down of the palm oil production growth will require more investments in increasing plantings and yields of soybeans, sunflowerseed, canola and rapeseed."

"In the years ahead, the prospective slowing down of the palm oil production growth will require more investments in increasing plantings and yields of soybeans, sunflowerseed, canola and rapeseed."

—Thomas Mielke

10 Oilseeds: World Production (Mn T)



*Soybeans accounted for 77 per cent of the increase in world oilseeds production over the past five years. All other oilseeds, which includes canola and rapeseed, have been fairly flat in comparison.*

Source: Thomas Mielke, ISTA Mielke



That will require a reversal of trends. Canadian canola production peaked at 21.5 million tonnes in 2017 and has been declining since then. European Union rapeseed production is also down. Stephan Arens, managing director of the Union for promotion of oil and protein plants (UFOP) in Germany, says challenges to rapeseed area and productivity in the EU include a recent drought as well as policies restricting genetically-modified plants, possible regulations on nitrogen use and expanded bans on pesticide products. Neonicotinoid seed treatments are banned, making flea beetle management more difficult, and glyphosate is now up for discussion. “There are lots of challenges for Germany’s crop production, not only for rapeseed,” Arens says.

## BIOFUELS POLICY

One EU policy that has helped Canadian canola exports is the biofuels mandate. The EU bought 2.1 million tonnes of Canadian canola seed in 2019-20, making it the fourth biggest export market for Canadian canola, after the U.S., China and Japan.

Chris Vervaet, executive director of the Canadian Oilseed Processors Association, says a “biofuel renaissance” is underway in the U.S., led by California’s Low Carbon Fuel Standard. Vervaet expects to see “explosive growth” in renewable diesel production capacity in the U.S. in the near future, but notes that Canadian canola does not have competitive access to the U.S. renewable diesel market at this time. “A priority is to work with the U.S. government to approve a pathway so we can take advantage of this surge in demand for renewable diesel,” he says.

Meanwhile, demand from the domestic Canadian biofuels market has potential to increase dramatically, and could demand another two million tonnes of canola oil per year by 2030. On January 1, 2021, Manitoba increased its biodiesel mandate to 3.5 per cent of all diesel, up from two per cent. It will rise again to five per cent on January 1, 2022. Canada’s Clean Fuel Standard, which is not yet finalized, could further enhance the domestic market for canola-based biodiesel. (Read more in the November 2020 Canola Digest article, “Biofuel standard could increase domestic canola demand” at [canoladigest.ca](http://canoladigest.ca).)

On the EU market front, Stephan Arens says EU usage of canola/rapeseed oil had stabilized, but following the EU-commission’s decision to phase out the use of critical palm oil, “there is more market potential for canola/rapeseed oil in European biofuels”.

## PROTECTIONISM AND COMPLIANCE

While government policy has shaped the biofuels industry, government policy can also restrict market access and trade.

Jim Everson, president of the Canola Council of Canada, says increased protectionism around the world – where

**“Canada must be able to demonstrate that our exports meet the requirements of importing countries. We have to develop strategies to make sure we remain compliant.”**

–Kathleen Donohue



*“We’re calling on the federal government to bolster support for market access activities, especially for the Asian market,” says Jim Everson, president of the Canola Council of Canada.*

more regulations are being put in place to protect domestic consumers, plants and animals – could present big challenges for Canadian canola exports. “We’re calling on the federal government to bolster support for market access activities, especially for the Asian market,” Everson says.

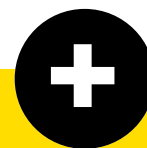
Canada exports over 90 per cent of its canola seed, oil and meal production, and Canada is the only major exporter of canola or rapeseed. According to USDA statistics, Canada accounts for about two thirds of all canola meal, canola oil and canola seed exports each year. All others are lumped into “other”. Within this “other” category, Australia and Ukraine are neck and neck for second place, but Australia’s rather large 2020 crop was 3.7 million tonnes – which is quite a bit less than Canada’s 18.7 million tonnes. What this means is that Canadian farmers are more vulnerable than anyone when it comes to policies that restrict canola trade.

Brian Innes, vice president of public affairs for the Canola Council of Canada, says barriers to watch in 2021 are China’s current blockages, a U.S. decision on Canadian canola access to its renewable diesel market, and EU decisions on soil carbon sequestration requirements, pesticide residue limits and traits such as Optimum Gly, a new glyphosate-resistant option.

Kathleen Donohue, director general for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, says more countries are modernizing their frameworks on how to regulate products of gene editing. In April 2021, the EU will release a study on the effect of current regulations on EU productivity. “I anticipate that the study will have a significant impact on the global landscape for gene-edited products,” Donohue says.

Ultimately, Canadian canola growers need to know what their customers want and how policies are changing in these markets. “Canada must be able to demonstrate that our exports meet the requirements of importing countries,” Donohue says. “We have to develop strategies to make sure we remain compliant.” ❀

–Jay Whetter is the editor of Canola Digest.



## Keep It Clean in 2021

The Keep It Clean program keeps up with possible trade-limiting issues with regard to genetic traits, pesticide residues and crop diseases. Read “Five simple tips to keep your canola ready for market” at [keepitclean.ca](http://keepitclean.ca).



Spring canola works well across the northern Ontario cropping area, but surprisingly good results for winter canola in southernmost parts of the province in 2020 should have more farmers taking a look at the crop.

# WINTER CANOLA SHINES IN ONTARIO IN 2020

BY RICHARD KAMCHEN

**O**ntario winter canola growers had a banner year in 2020, and future growing seasons could be even better.

“Although acreage was low, 2020 was an excellent year for winter canola,” says Meghan Moran, canola and edible bean specialist with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

Nobody experienced better yields than Ian, Nick and Ben Toll, who won the Ontario Canola Growers Association yield challenge in 2020 with a winter canola yield of 5,743 lb./ac., or 115 bushels per acre. This is from the best one acre within a field, and farmers must work with a verified agronomist to confirm the yield result. The overall yield for the field was 85 bu./ac.

**“The past few years, there have just been smaller fields and low acreage of winter canola – about 1,500 acres – but right now there is closer to 5,000 acres planted for harvest in 2021.”**

–Meghan Moran.

This is only the second time the Tolls had planted canola. They tried it because they seek another crop to fit into their rotation of corn, soybeans and wheat. Winter canola has to follow winter wheat because nothing else is harvested in time. But with winter canola ripening July, it provides an opportunity to plant soybeans right afterward for a second crop in the same year. The Tolls’ double-cropped soybean crop also did well in 2020 – with a yield of over 30 bu./ac. “With the price over \$14 per bushel, it made it worthwhile,” Ian Toll says.

Inputs for the top-yielding crop started with per-acre rates of 50 pounds of nitrogen, 80 pounds of potash, 80 pounds of phosphorus and 20 pounds of sulphur applied in the fall. In the spring, they applied added 28-0-0 nitrogen at 150 lb./ac., and another 20 lb./ac. of sulphur.

At flowering, they applied fungicide. They also desiccated the crop and applied a pre-harvest pod sealant to help hold the pods together and reduce harvest loss while straight combining.

## WEATHER

The Tolls credit Mother Nature as the main factor behind their above average crop as they received plenty of rain and decent temperatures during pollination.

Moran adds that a fairly mild winter in 2019-20 likely contributed to strong winter survival in many areas of the province. But that’s not to say conditions were consistently ideal. A late spring frost put winter canola to an important test, which the crop passed.

Winter canola growing regions experienced temperatures above 15°C and as high as 20°C in late April, so the crop advanced quickly toward first flower, Moran notes.

*Ian Toll of Blenheim, Ont., planted winter canola again last fall after great results with the crop in 2019-20. Winter canola follows winter wheat, and the early harvest of winter canola allows for a double-crop of soybeans in the same year. With this sequence, the Tolls can harvest three crops in a two-year span.*





But during May 8 to 13, temperatures plunged below freezing for a few days in a row. In the 1990s, this would have been fatal or severely damaging to winter canola. Not so in 2020. “Many fields were scouted for injury, and the impact of frost was relatively limited,” Moran reports.

### MERCEDES VARIETY

Mercedes, a cultivar from DL Seeds, is the only winter hybrid registered for production in Ontario. Moran says some firms do breed winter canola in Ontario, but their market is overseas. For now, she says, there’s limited interest in breeding for Ontario or registering more varieties simply because the market is so small.

However, other genetics have been considered as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s research centre in Essex County has been the scene of performance trials of varieties brought in from the U.S. “That said, we are happy with the performance of the hybrid Mercedes,” says Moran.

### RISING INTEREST

Winter canola is getting increased attention from Ontario growers, Moran says.

“The past few years, there have just been smaller fields and low acreage of winter canola – about 1,500 acres – but right now there is closer to 5,000 acres planted for harvest in 2021,” says Moran.

She notes farmers in the southernmost areas of the province are very interested in adding a profitable crop to their short rotations. Some, like the Tolls, are able to double-crop soybeans after canola, thereby harvesting two crops in one year and making winter canola even more attractive.

Farther north, in the traditional spring canola areas, winter varieties face more challenges due to harsher winter and spring conditions. Moran says there are still some success stories. Even though farmers in these regions are unlikely to have the chance to double-crop soybeans, it would make sense for farmers to switch some drier fields to winter canola, Moran says. She adds that choosing winter canola over spring also avoids issues with swede midge, which have plagued spring canola in Ontario over the past few years.



## In 2021, recycle every jug

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learn more!



*Given the current COVID-19 situation, please call ahead to collection sites for instructions on delivering empties.*

## LEARNING CURVE

The majority of the province's winter canola growers are in the south, and, like the Tolls, most are either just trying it for the first or second time. Although this inexperience has resulted in some harvest challenges and nutrient deficiencies, farmers are quickly catching on, Moran says.

She notes growers are choosing the right fields for the crop, avoiding heavier clays and poor drainage that contributes to winter and spring kill. "Many are planting on fields that have gravel underneath or tend to be overly dry in summer for other crops," Moran says.

Some of the recent success can also be attributed to observing details, like nailing planting dates and seeding rates, she says.

Growers are learning how to handle winter canola's smaller seed, and many are using row unit planters that produce fields that are very even with all plants at the same growth stage, Moran says.

## WINTER CANOLA OUTSIDE OF ONTARIO

All canola grown in Western Canada is seeded in the spring, and that's unlikely to change. Some years ago, University of Alberta's canola genetics and molecular breeding expert Habibur Rahman worked on winter canola for the Prairies. He found little potential to improve winter canola's hardiness trait through traditional breeding.

It's a different story in the U.S., however, where winter canola has a bright future, according to Kansas State University canola breeder Michael Stamm. About 15 million acres of winter wheat are grown in the southern Great Plains alone, and climate change – with resulting warmer and wetter conditions – could create opportunities for adding winter canola into the rotation, he notes. Fluctuating winter temperatures, however, could prove limiting.

"Latitudes between 35°N and 40°N, where continental conditions are highly diverse, winter survival can be unpredictable at times," says Stamm. "Variable winter weather here may be more problematic than where temperatures are consistently cold and snow cover is present."

Winter canola also faces other challenges – ones that any new crop needs to overcome before being accepted by new growers as an alternative. These are varietal consistency and viable markets. The crop needs to deliver high yields and acceptable oil content in climates that can vary from too wet or dry, and too cold or hot. "It takes consistent production in order for the crushers to establish regional markets," Stamm says. 🌻

—Richard Kamchen is an agriculture freelance writer based in Winnipeg, Man.



*Mercedes from DL Seeds is the only winter canola cultivar available in Ontario at this time.*



*This photo was taken on May 22, 2020. The Tolls' winter canola was in full flower.*



Ian, Nick and Ben Toll won the Ontario Canola Growers Association yield challenge in 2020 with a winter canola yield of 5,743 lb./ac., or 115 bu./ac. See full results at [ontariocanologrowers.ca](http://ontariocanologrowers.ca).

*The Tolls planted their canola with a row-crop planter, which provided very even rows.*



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# AGRONOMY INSIGHTS

Tips and tools from the Canola Council of Canada agronomy team

## OUR AGRONOMY FOCUS AREAS FOR 2021

**E**ach year, we look for new focus areas that ultimately support grower profitability and productivity while also promoting agronomically sound crop rotations, biodiversity and improvements to soil and water use. By balancing all of these objectives, Canadian canola can maintain its strong, established brand and use these achievements to keep and expand its market share.

Our focus areas for 2021 include selection of the best cultivars for each field, increased adoption of 4R fertilizer management, in-field diagnostics of disease threats, and promotion of new Canola Calculator tools for plant counts and harvest loss measurement.

### USE THE RIGHT CULTIVAR FOR EACH FIELD

Increased yield and profit could result when a grower matches seed traits to the unique situations in each field. Here are a few situations:

- Disease resistance should be a primary consideration. Choose the clubroot-resistant (CR) hybrids that perform best in your region. For fields with clubroot in CR hybrids, extend rotations and try a different resistance source the next time canola goes on that field. Choose the blackleg R gene that matches the predominant *L. maculans* race in the field.
- Pod shatter traits aren't just for straight cutting. They can help minimize harvest losses and provide flexibility for farmers who might not be able to cut every field at the optimum time.
- Rotate herbicide groups as one way to slow herbicide resistance in weeds.
- Match maturity to your growing zone. If planting date is pushed back, consider an earlier maturing cultivar – if seed is available.

Local data is always best when looking for help with cultivar decisions. Consult results at [canolaperformancetrials.ca](http://canolaperformancetrials.ca) for the locations closest to you. Look at multiple years of data. Talk to local area agronomists and your neighbours. What worked well for them? What didn't? Why or why not? Yield is important but return on investment is more important.

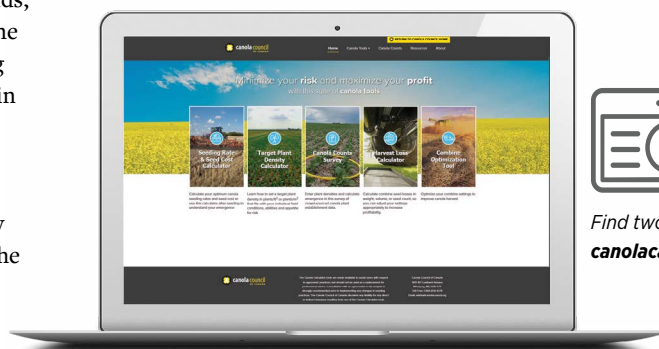
### INCREASE 4R ADOPTION

Canada's canola industry has a goal to utilize 4R Nutrient Stewardship practices on 90 per cent of canola acres by 2025. The current rate, according to the latest Fertilizer Canada survey, is just over 50 per cent.

Remember that 4R is a process and you do not need a specific piece of equipment or software to begin 4R. Give some thought as to right product, right rate, right time and right place for each crop or field and formulate a plan. Then consult a 4R-designated agronomist to gain additional professional advice. Find practical tips at [fertilizercanada.ca](http://fertilizercanada.ca), [canolaencyclopedia.ca](http://canolaencyclopedia.ca) and [canoladigest.ca](http://canoladigest.ca).

### BETTER IN-FIELD DIAGNOSTICS OF DISEASE THREATS

We will make a priority in 2021 to help farmers and agronomists differentiate all major plant diseases, including the relatively unfamiliar disease, verticillium stripe. For blackleg, we have a new comprehensive management guide that focuses on stewarding resistance genetics. Scouting for clubroot might seem like a no-brainer – pull plants, look for galls. Unfortunately, infestations are often missed for years while spore concentrations build up to catastrophic levels. Plan to scout every canola field for clubroot, every year. Find scouting and management tips at [clubroot.ca](http://clubroot.ca). Finally, to help manage the biggest disease threat to canola – sclerotinia stem rot – we're moving toward a better estimate of the threat, especially with new quicker tools to assess the presence and relative abundance of sclerotinia spores in the canopy.



Find two new tools at [canolacalculator.ca](http://canolacalculator.ca).

### ASSESS STANDS USING CANOLA COUNTS

[Canolacalculator.ca](http://Canolacalculator.ca) has a new tool to crowd-source plant establishment data. The Canola Counts survey, launching this spring, was produced by the Canola Council of Canada with funding from Alberta Canola, SaskCanola and Manitoba Canola Growers. It will help drive the adoption of plant establishment assessments while tracking progress towards canola industry production goals.

Users will submit plant density and emergence data from canola fields across the Prairies. Each field entered gives you a chance to win great prizes for spring counts (two to four leaves or more) or fall counts (harvest timing). More fields equals more chances to win.

Many canola fields are still averaging 50 to 60 per cent emergence, which means that of every 10 seeds planted, four or five of them fail to emerge or contribute to yield. Conducting stand assessments in every field, every year will help identify weaknesses and evaluate changes to plant establishment practices.





Hey everybody, let's count plants! Our suite of tools at **canolacalculator.ca** has a new tool to crowd-source plant establishment data. Plan to enter your #CanolaCounts this spring (2-4 leaf) and fall (harvest timing) for chances to win great prizes. Compare your fields to regional averages, find ways to improve your stand, and help us track plant establishment improvements over time. It's a win-win-win.

## ASSESS HARVEST LOSS USING THE SEED LOSS CALCULATOR

Canola harvest loss can be fairly low with good harvest conditions. A PAMI harvest loss survey during the fall of 2019 found that losses were “significantly” lower when temperatures were above 23°C, relative humidity was below 45 per cent and skies were sunny. What the survey doesn't tell us is how bad losses can get as temperatures get cooler, humidity keeps rising and night sets in. That is where some on-farm testing comes in handy. What are your losses after supper or after the sun sets and the crop gets tough? If they are five per cent, would you take the time to slow down, readjust or just quit for the day? Step one in answering these questions is taking proper drop-pan measurement of loss, and doing these tests often and under varying conditions. Step two is to plug this measurement into the new Harvest Loss Tool at **canolacalculator.ca** to determine your losses. Step three is to use the Combine Optimization Tool at **canolacalculator.ca** to determine how to reduce these losses.

## BIG PICTURE

Markets and weather are major factors that impact the profitability of canola. We need to provide the canola that our customers want and produce it in a way that meets their expectations. We also need to climate-proof canola.

Canola yield is a function of genetics, environment and management (G x E x M). We cannot control the weather, but management can help to optimize yield potential of the genetics and protect this yield from some effects of the environment. Genetic “resistance” to environmental challenges will also improve. Technology is coming along that can identify how specific hybrids perform under moisture and temperature stresses, and then isolate the genetic code for these complex traits. Technology is also available to help breeders select for these traits. This technology will become more important because climate change will force a change in the genetics needed to increase productivity.

Average temperature during the growing season is increasing and will continue to increase, but precipitation for the Prairies growing season is not expected to keep pace. Therefore, we'll need canola cultivars better suited to extreme heat, warmer nights and inadequate precipitation. With new genetics, our crops will also help to combat climate change. Crops use CO<sub>2</sub> during photosynthesis. Increases in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> could increase seed yield, and improved genetics could take up even more CO<sub>2</sub> and store it in the soil, thereby providing a further reduction in greenhouse gas in the atmosphere.

How do we make sure we have the resources to adapt? We must invest in people, research and communication, and put the focus on collaboration. We need agricultural meteorologists to increase our understanding surrounding climate and agriculture. We need plant and crop physiologists to research how to capture more CO<sub>2</sub>. We need soil scientists to research how to store carbon in the soil long term. And of course we need farmers and agronomists to make sure these research findings can be applied at the farm level in a manner that preserves and ideally increases margins. This big picture is all about increased yield, profitability, sustainability and reduced production risk. ✨

## Survey to show productivity challenges for canola

Through November to January, the Canola Council of Canada surveyed over 1,000 canola growers from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. These results are being analyzed and will help the CCC identify key agronomy and productivity shortcomings that need to be addressed. It will also identify regional differences so that messages can be more closely matched to the local need.



# What sustainability means to me

The conversation about sustainable farm production practices will continue to gain steam in Canada and around the world as people put more focus on how humans are treating the planet. While the objectives may seem unclear at times, the topic cannot be avoided. Our four panelists talk about sustainability, what it means to them, and what they do on their farms to be sustainable.

BY JAY WHETTER



**CHRISTI FRIESEN**  
BROWNVILLE, ALBERTA

**C**hristi Friesen says sustainability is really important to them. “Our farm is our legacy,” she says. That is why their farm

management decisions are made for the good of the land and to ensure opportunities for the next generation.

“Our daughter grew up on the combine, and she’ll spend 18-hour days in the cab with me. She cries every fall when it goes into the shed,” Friesen says. “We want to protect that strong connection. We want to be able to hand this farm to our kids and make sure it’s something they can build upon and do something with.”

The Friesens have an Environmental Farm Plan, which helped them acquire section control for the sprayer. “It allows us to prevent overlap, which could be half a jug or a jug per field. The savings really add up,” she says.

Their sustainable approach means making a lot of decisions that are just “common sense,” she says. “For example, we don’t fill up the sprayer anywhere near the water source.”

They follow 4R for fertilizer management, which saves money and time, and makes fertilizer “as efficient as possible,” Friesen says. “4R is so widely accepted among farmers because the guidelines are so cut and dry, and it can work on a farm anywhere in Canada.”

The Friesens also signed up for sustainability programs that give their canola access to the European biofuels market. “It’s a voluntary program, and we decided to participate because it could mean more market access for us.”

Even the new Responsible Grain Code of Practice, which is currently collecting farmer input, is something she’s looks at with an open mind.

Friesen sees all of these programs as ways to develop new relationships. “If you don’t have relationships, you don’t have a business,” she says. “We’ve been given opportunities to make special grain sales because of the relationships we’ve worked to create.”

“Our daughter grew up on the combine, and she’ll spend 18-hour days in the cab with me. She cries every fall when it goes into the shed. We want to protect that strong connection. We want to be able to hand this farm to our kids and make sure it’s something they can build upon and do something with.”

—Christi Friesen

“The key for me is that the farm functions within the ecosystem of the area and also helps to support that ecosystem. It is difficult to put an ROI to these non-economic parts of the farm, but having them makes me feel better.”

—Dean Roberts



**DEAN ROBERTS**  
COLEVILLE, SASKATCHEWAN

**D**ean Roberts has participated in a few sustainability initiatives over the years but they all seemed to be lacking something.

“It felt like we were just checking boxes and not really doing anything different,” he says. “Also, in the end, I had the same market access as someone else who wasn’t following any of the recommended practices.”

That said, he has his own personal and economic reasons for following sustainability practices, especially when it comes to land use. “We have acres that are maybe profitable one year in 10, so I’m looking at tame hay and possibly trees for those acres,” he says. “The challenge is that acres that don’t grow crops very well don’t grow grass well either, so establishment has proven difficult. Honestly, they never should have been broken in the first place.”

Roberts likes having the natural areas on his farm. “The key for me is that the farm functions within the ecosystem of the area and also helps to support that ecosystem,” he says. “It is difficult to put an ROI to these non-economic parts of the farm, but having them makes me feel better.”

Extending these practices to rented land is also important, he says. “Talking to landowners about taking acres out of production can be a challenging discussion,” Roberts says, “but it comes down to the relationship with the landowner. I want to treat the land that I rent the same as the land that I own, and for the most part, my landowners are pretty good with it.”

He adds that new technology makes it easier than ever to work around non-farmed spaces, even within fields. Roberts is looking into First Pass from Verge, which maps out a field and determines the optimal travel pass so you don’t waste machinery time.

Overlap control systems have been a huge economic benefit for the farm. “We used to have 12 to 13 per cent overlap of seed and fertilizer on some of our more challenging



"I think Canadian farmers get a bad reputation because of things farmers in other countries have done. We have to make a better effort to describe to consumers what we do and why we do it, rather than always having to defend ourselves."

—Chuck Fossay



Photo: iStock.com/Fertnig

fields, but with sectional control we've got that down to five per cent," he says. "I'm stoked about that." With sprayer nozzle control, farmers can sweep the boom over a slough and have it turn off. It means paths can stay straight while product only goes where it's needed.

Roberts hasn't given up on the sustainability programs either. His local agronomy team is partnered with Land O' Lakes, which is launching its Truterra program in Canada this year. He will be looking into it.



**CHUCK FOSSAY**  
**STARBUCK,**  
**MANITOBA**

**C**huck Fossay says farmers have a lot of practices

they can do to be

sustainable and be more environmentally friendly. "But every farm is different," he says, "and what works for me may not work for my neighbour."

Fossay has always used crop rotation as well as 4R practices to improve profitability and long-term sustainability of his business. "We usually grow four to seven different crops every year. This allows us to rotate our fields so that we have three to four years between similar crops," Fossay says. "It allows us to control weeds and insects with different chemical combinations and also different types of crop competition." With rotation between crops, it also usually means higher yields – which improves profitability. "And the diversity is good for the environment," Fossay adds.

They've been following the fertilizer principles of 4R – which is Right Source at the Right Rate, Right Time and Right Place – for 30 or 40 years "because it just makes good economic sense," he says. He uses only those



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products that each crop needs and at rates such that each pound of fertilizer provides an economic return. He applies fertilizer in the spring or late in the fall and incorporates the fertilizer into the ground where the crop can use it. This means more is taken up by the crop and reduces losses into the air and into drainage ditches. The goal is to maximize nutrient use efficiency with “the hope that it also reduces the impact on the environment, with less nitrogen and phosphorus going into the air and water,” he says.

Adoption of 4R fertilizer practices is an example of the good things farmers are doing in Canada, Fossay says. “I think Canadian farmers get a bad reputation because of things farmers in other countries have done. We have to make a better effort to describe to consumers what we do and why we do it, rather than always having to defend ourselves,” he says. “I hope consumers realize that we can’t go back to native prairie grass because we still need to grow the wheat to make bread and canola for oil and protein. Part of keeping the soil healthy and productive requires the use of fertilizer.”

Fossay has a strip of grass and trees along the small river that runs through the farm. This natural area captures snow and reduces soil erosion from their more contoured land. It also provides a living environment for native species of plants and animals. “It’s a part of nature that we like to preserve.”

Fossay acknowledges that his farm is fairly flat and doesn’t have a lot of potholes, so his natural spaces are well-defined and off to the side. But he says farmers in general do want to pass along their farm to children and grandchildren in the same or better shape than it was when they started.



**KATELYN DUNCAN**  
**REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN**

**K**atelyn Duncan and her family give special attention to quality of life on the farm, with the goal of maintaining a high level of job satisfaction for everyone involved. They make sure to pay

competitive wages and, except for seeding, spraying and harvest seasons, try to maintain an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule with weekends and statutory holidays off.

“This is all part of employee retention,” Duncan says, and the retention goal applies to all staff – including family. “I work the hours I want to work, stopping before I get to the point where I dislike the job,” she says.

Even during the busy spraying season, Duncan will spray from 6:30 a.m. until 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. “All the spraying got done on time and I am still able to take time for evening activities.”

Duncan says they’ve also become a lot better at team building and workplace culture. “We celebrate birthdays. We have breakfast at the farm on Fridays. We have post-harvest and post-seeding celebrations,” she says.

While taking care of its people, the farm also strives to take care of the land. To give just a few examples, Duncan says they use a three-year crop rotation to capture the yield and input-cost benefits of that diversity. They rotate chemical groups to prevent resistant pest

**“We recognize that a successful long-term farm business is all about partnerships. It is important that we try to maintain relationships with dealers, purchasers, accountants, bankers and ideally each other.”**

–Katelyn Duncan

populations. And they use guidance technology to reduce overlap when applying inputs.

And of course, they have to make sure the farm stays economically viable. “We purchase inputs well in advance because it usually provides a cost benefit, especially for fertilizer. We also price-shop between two or three retailers,” Duncan says. Then, when selling the crop, they will compare and negotiate with various delivery points. They will deliver direct to canola processors, which is a six-hour round trip, if it provides a price premium.

“We recognize that a successful long-term farm business is all about partnerships,” Duncan says. “It is important that we try to maintain relationships with dealers, purchasers, accountants, bankers and ideally each other.” 🌻

–Jay Whetter is the editor of *Canola Digest*.

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Will you make any adjustments to improve nutrient use efficiency in 2021? In this article, farmer Doug Hofmann and agronomist Sara Lemmerich discuss their standard 4R strategies and new objectives for this year.

# YOUR 4R FERTILIZER MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2021

BY JAY WHETTER

*Applying all fertilizer in side bands while seeding satisfies 4R recommendations for time and place.*

**D**oug Hofmann soil tests every field every year. The farmer from Muenster, Sask., doesn't have to soil test every year to be 4R compliant, but he does it anyway. "For the cost, I don't even think about not doing it," he says.

He has a GPS-marked sampling location for each field, and he goes back to that same area each year. He will sample more intensely in fields where yield maps show possible problem areas. For fields that are new to the farm, he samples nine locations per quarter and submits separate samples for each location. "That gives us a better idea what the land needs, and we can pour the coals to it," he says.

For canola acres, Hofmann uses a phosphorus-potassium-sulphur blend of 0-40-10-15, and sets the rate for each field based on soil test results. Nitrogen is applied using variable-rate mapping.

With his long-term and intensive fertilizer program, Hofmann says soil test results have become fairly similar for each field, but he still won't stop testing every field every year. "It helps us fine-tune things," he says. Fine-tuning for 2021 will include an adjustment on sulphur rates. "We're running into a bit of excess sulphur in some fields, so we'll cut back a little bit in 2021."

Hofmann develops his fertilizer strategies with help from Sara Lemmerich, an agronomist with Nutrien at Humboldt, Sask. Lemmerich has her 4R designation from Fertilizer Canada. She's also a certified crop adviser (CCA) and might try for the new CCA 4R designation in 2021. "This is a logical step," she says.

Nutrien takes a company-wide approach to 4R and has quite a few staff agronomists with their Fertilizer Canada 4R designation. With this designation, agronomists can help growers get their acres counted under the 4R program. The Canola Council of Canada would like to see 90 per cent of canola acres using 4R practices by 2025 – as a way to demonstrate positive production practices for Canadian canola.

Lemmerich says working with Hofmann and other farmers on their 4R practices is "leading to good conversations" on fertilizer rates, sources, placement and timing.

Of the 4Rs, she says rate is one that "can always be reexamined." Nitrogen rates get a lot of the attention, but phosphorus rates are "often forgotten about", she says. A lot of farmers will apply 25 to 30 lb./ac. of phosphorus because that is the rate they've always used, but what is the crop removing? "We've been seeing a lot of 50 bu./ac. yields over the past few years, which means phosphate removal could be up to 60 lb./ac. per year," she says. That helps to explain why phosphorus levels are so low.

Except for Hofmann's. He has built up soil phosphorus levels to the point now where he doesn't feel the need to use seed-placed phosphorus. "We don't put any fertilizer at all in the seed row," he says.

Lemmerich says seed-row placement often comes up in her conversations with farmers, and some are surprised about the possible crop damage that can come from higher rates of seed-placed fertilizer. "Reducing fertilizer in the seed row will be especially important in 2021 if the spring is dry," she says. Dry soils increase the risk.



Photo: Lyle Cowell, Nutrien





## BASIC 4R PRINCIPLES

Farmers can review 4R principles at [fertilizercanada.ca](https://fertilizercanada.ca). The “basic” level practices include a recent soil test (in the past three years) to establish a baseline for soil phosphorus levels and tools “such as nitrate soil tests” to set crop- and field-specific nitrogen rates. Basic practices also say that “any nitrogen fertilizer” source can be used if that source is applied in spring or in-season. Banding is generally considered the best placement, but broadcast with incorporation is acceptable. For nitrogen, basic 4R practices specify that farmers should “avoid fall broadcast of unprotected nitrogen”.

Hofmann applies all of his fertilizer in one pass at the time of seeding. He uses the standard fertilizer sources and puts it all in the side band. With side-band placement, fertilizer is within easy reach of plant roots and “it’s not going anywhere”, he says. “It goes into the ground and I know exactly where it is.”

He applies all fertilizer at the time of seeding because top-dress has risks — especially for timing. “By the time you realize the crop needs more fertilizer, application is probably going to be about 10 days too late,” he says. Also, with all fertilizer in place at the time of seeding, he can focus his in-crop efforts on weed, disease and insect management.

Hofmann learns a lot from running plots and trials on his farm. “I like to try different things and with the trials, I get to see the new stuff first hand. I get to see how it was seeded and the rates. I get to see the truth behind it all,” he says.

Lemmerich says Nutrien has done a lot of canola trials with Hofmann over the years. “Doug is our guinea pig guy,” she says.

For variety plots in particular, Hofmann uses the opportunity to try out higher nitrogen rates. His usual average across the farm is 90 lb./ac., but he’ll use 150 lb./ac. on the seed plots to see how the varieties stand up and perform.

As a result of these trials, he wants to try higher nitrogen rates in some spots in 2021. After years and years of harvest data, he has mapped the high-productivity acres where he’d like to try higher nitrogen rates. His variable-rate application system makes it an easy adjustment.

In the interview for this article, Hofmann actually used the word “cheap” to describe fertilizer. It’s the biggest input cost on the farm, but he calls it cheap because the return on investment is so clear. This is why he’s always looking for ways to push for higher profitability. After years of soil testing, yield mapping, on-farm trials and discussions with advisers like Sara Lemmerich, he has come to the conclusion, “I think we can do more with fertilizer.” 🌻

—Jay Whetter is the editor of *Canola Digest*.

“Reducing fertilizer in the seed row will be especially important in 2021 if the spring is dry.”

— Sara Lemmerich

Doug Hofmann says soil testing every field every year helps him fine-tune things. He gives this example: “We’re running into a bit of excess sulphur in some fields, so we’ll cut back a little bit in 2021.”



For more on canola fertilizer needs, read the article “How much fertilizer does canola need?” at [canolawatch.org](https://canolawatch.org).

## How to get your 4R acres counted

**What is 4R?** 4R Nutrient Stewardship is a Fertilizer Canada framework encouraging growers to use the four ‘Rights’: Right Source @ the Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place. The goal of the 4R program is to help crop producers minimize environmental concerns related to agriculture while maximizing economic benefits. The principle is simple, provide the right source of nutrients at the rate, time and place that will minimize the losses of nutrients and maximize the crops access to the nutrients.

**Why does it matter?** Canada’s canola industry sees a lot of potential for 4R Nutrient Stewardship for land enhancements, profitability improvements and proactively showing our customers and their governments how we’re taking sustainability seriously. As a result, Canada’s canola industry has a goal to utilize 4R Nutrient Stewardship practices on 90 per cent of canola acres by 2025.

**How to get your 4R Acres counted?** To become a part of the 4R program, farmers have to work with a 4R designated agronomist. The agronomist helps the farmer construct a specific 4R nutrient management plan to help ensure your acres can be considered 4R. Once farmers have taken the steps required to complete a 4R Plan, the 4R designated agronomist compile all 4R acres, on a crop and location basis, and submits these acres to Fertilizer Canada. Fertilizer Canada never sees individual plans developed as that stays between the agronomist and their farmer customer – all Fertilizer Canada sees is a total number of acres by location and crop. (A farmer cannot get a designation on their own.) There will be increasing demand for 4R designated agronomists to meet industry goals, and provide this service for their customers. Ask your local retailer about the designation program today.

**What’s in it for the farmer?** Two things. First, fertilizer is the biggest expense in canola production. Through the use of 4R Nutrient Stewardship, farmers can ensure they use fertilizer efficiently and get more return from the investment. Second, end users and regulators are paying more attention to crop production practices such as how fertilizer is utilized, especially escapes to the atmosphere and runoff into waterways. 4R Designation demonstrates that farmers have the same cares and concerns as other members of society.

For more information, talk to a CCC agronomy specialist or see the Fertilizer Canada resources at [fertilizercanada.ca/nutrient-stewardship/4r-designation](https://fertilizercanada.ca/nutrient-stewardship/4r-designation)

Canola Discovery Forum 2020, which was held online in December, had a 4R fertilizer management theme. A panel discussion described why Right Product at the Right Rate, Right Time and Right Place is important and provided tips that will help with adoption and understanding of 4R principles.

# 4R HIGHLIGHTS FROM CANOLA DISCOVERY FORUM



Photo: Shutterstock, Jostein

**A** Canola Council of Canada goal is to have 90 per cent of canola acres using 4R practices by 2025. Fertilizer Canada's latest fertilizer use survey found that currently 51.6 per cent of Canadian canola acres would qualify as 4R.

The question of 4R adoption came up during the Canola Discovery Forum panel discussion. Panelists were Lyle Cowell, an agronomist with Nutrien in Saskatchewan, Mario Tenuta, a research scientist with the University of Manitoba, Dean Nelson, a canola grower from Alberta, and Adam Gurr, a canola grower and independent researcher from Manitoba. Gurr took the lead in answering the question about why more growers don't follow 4R.

"This one really puzzles me," Gurr says. "We have been using 4R practices on our farm for as long as I can recall. With the use of 4R nutrient stewardship, we are more profitable than we would be if we didn't use it, simple as that. It makes perfect sense to band your fertilizer as close to seeding as possible and at rates that will maximize profitability."

In the live discussion during Canola Discovery Forum, panelists emphasized the importance of placing fertilizer into the soil. "I think subsoil banding is absolutely critical," Tenuta says. "The concentration of nutrients results in less interaction with the soil and means more availability to the plant. It is one of the things farmers have some ability to control."

When asked about the next breakthrough fertility research or management options, Cowell says, "I don't think there is a new breakthrough on the horizon. ... Perhaps the next step is to target the 4R practice per field or per landscape. Too many farms are now applying the same rate of nitrogen nutrients per crop across every acre. This is very 1990. We can do better with more accurate 4R practices."

When asked what fertilizer changes should take place to increase

yield to 52 bu./ac. in the next five years, which is a target for the Canola Council of Canada strategic plan, Nelson answers, "I think we have all the tools we need to reach those goals. ...The most significant factor now is taking the time to do the little things to get that extra five to 10 bushels we need. We need to take that 10 minutes to double check how the seeder is seeding in each field. And take the time to double check that our combine is set the best we can, not just on that first day of combining."

These answers represent just a small sample from the panel discussion. The live panel is captured in a Canola Watch podcast, which is posted under the Canola Watch tab at [canolawatch.org](http://canolawatch.org). Panelists also answered questions that weren't addressed during the live event. For these, look for the article "Canola Discovery Forum 4R panel – more Q&A" at [canolawatch.org](http://canolawatch.org).

As part of the discovery process, Canola Discovery Forum 2020 included an interactive poll to gather input from all participants. When asked for the first word they think of when they think about 4R, the most common reply was "sustainability", followed by "efficiency". When asked about barriers to 4R adoption, the top answer was "education" followed by "cost" and then "logistics". Complete poll results are attached to the article "Highlights from Canola Week 2020" at [canolawatch.org](http://canolawatch.org). ✂

## Fertilizer management resources



- Find lots in the Fertility chapter at [canolaencyclopedia.ca](http://canolaencyclopedia.ca)
- For 4R details, click the Stewardship tab at [fertilizercanada.ca](http://fertilizercanada.ca)
- Canola Discovery Forum 2020 highlights, including panel Q&A, podcast and more, are at [canolawatch.org](http://canolawatch.org)



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JOHN DEERE

# Highlights from plant establishment research

This article provides a quick summary of research results that could influence your canola stand establishment objectives for 2021. For more background information or specific details on each study, check out the redesigned Canola Research Hub at [canolaresearch.ca](https://canolaresearch.ca).

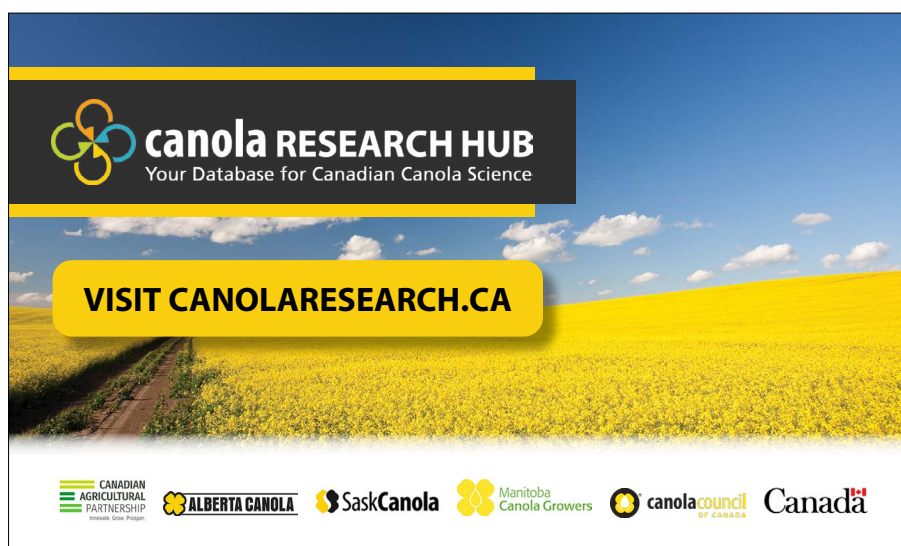
BY TARYN DICKSON

**A**gronomy recommendations for canola establishment are based on research, including the five projects described below. This short article is just a sample of the research results posted on the newly redesigned Canola Research Hub at [canolaresearch.ca](https://canolaresearch.ca).

- Christiane Catellier with Indian Head Agricultural Research Foundation compared seed sizes in a small-plot field trial in 2018. Trials at five Saskatchewan locations compared two different seed lots from LibertyLink (4.3 and 5.5g TKW) and Roundup Ready (4.8 and 5.9g TKW) varieties. The study, which compared three canola seeding rates (five, 10 and 15 seeds per square foot), concluded that overall, the most economic and least risky seeding rate to achieve adequate plant stand population in this study would be at or near the seeding rate of 10 seeds per square foot.
- Yantai Gan with AAFC led a survey of the best management practices of more advanced and experienced canola producers across the major canola production zones of Western Canada in 2011-2012. Along with large variation in farming practices and approaches, it was noted that actual plant density should be used in predicting canola crop yields. Furthermore, producers should take note of typical seed survival in their regions, and adjust their seeding rate accordingly to achieve the target plant stand.
- Ken Coles with Farming Smarter examined the impact of precision planters on canola stand establishment in southern Alberta. The study concluded that under favourable conditions for crop growth, spatially uniform crop stands established by precise placement of seeds allow for more efficient utilization of resources by individual plants, and less inter-plant competition. This led to better crop growth and yield.
- Aaron Glenn with AAFC ran a 2010-12 study at four sites across the Prairies to see how stubble height affected canola emergence. Glenn found that crop residue height (wheat stubble cut at 20 cm, 50 cm, and/or harvested with a stripper header) had no consistent significant effects on canola emergence, disease pressure or yield at any of the sites.
- Bob Blackshaw with AAFC ran a two-year study comparing six different openers in small plot replicated trials across different soil types in Western Canada and a field-scale study using farmers' seeding equipment. He found that increasing seeding speed will reduce the precision of canola seed placement and thereby reduce the percentage of canola seeds that emerge — no matter which opener you use.

To read more about any of these projects, go to [CanolaResearch.ca](https://CanolaResearch.ca) and select the 'Plant Establishment' topic under the filtering options (providing on the left side of the screen). All of these studies can be found under that heading. 🌻

—Taryn Dickson is resource manager, crop production and innovation, with the Canola Council of Canada.







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# Video celebrates farmers on Agriculture Day

Canada's Agriculture Day was February 23, and it gave all Canadians a chance to recognize the work our farmers do to provide a reliable supply of healthy, safe food. Canola Eat Well used the day to launch a video on sustainable canola farming.

BY ELLEN PRUDEN

**D**id you feel the love on February 23? Did you reflect on your commitment to care for the crops that become nutritious ingredients at consumers' kitchen tables? Canadians made a big deal about the work farmers do as they celebrated Agriculture Day on February 23. Canada's Agriculture Day, which happens every year in February, is dedicated to celebrating Canadian agriculture and food. It is a great opportunity to let everyone know how we feel about this amazing industry. Canola Eat Well (CEW) and Canadian Canola Growers Association (CCGA) used the occasion to launch a new video featuring farmers sharing stories about sustainability on their farms.

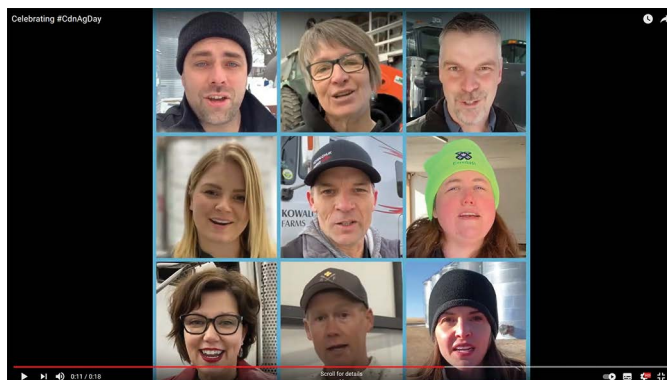
"As farmers, we know that embracing innovation allows us to enhance the soil and minimize our footprint on the environment," says Bernie McClean, chair of Canadian Canola Growers Association and a farmer from northwest Saskatchewan. "Our farms are home to wildlife, food for honeybees and soils rich with organic matter that provide a vessel for storing carbon, reducing Canada's greenhouse gases."

These are important messages to share. Research shows that Canadians are interested in knowing about sustainability practices on farms, and that environmental practices on Canadian farms is a decision-making factor when purchasing food.

The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) polls Canadians every year. Its 2020 public trust survey showed that while consumers maintain a high level of trust in farmers, consumers want more information about agriculture and they say that sustainability in food is increasingly non-negotiable.

A majority of those consumers surveyed say they actively seek out food items that use less packaging (55 per cent of respondents) or have a minimal environmental impact (47 per cent). Demand for environmentally-friendly food options will only continue to grow. Younger Canadians (aged 18 to 23) are more likely to seek out these items and as their purchasing power increases with age, so too will their demand for these options.

"As a farmer, it's my responsibility to grow safe, quality food and we are constantly learning and adapting our farming practices," says Jeannette Andrashewski, canola farmer from Two Hills, Alberta.



*Canola farmers came together to share a united message to Canadians about sustainability. This message was captured in a video launched on Canada's Agriculture Day on February 23, 2021. See the video at [canolaeatwell.com](https://canolaeatwell.com). Canadian Canola Growers Association (CCGA) produced the video in cooperation with Canola Eat Well. CCGA represents canola growers on national and international agricultural issues, programs and policies. For more than 35 years, Canadian Canola Growers Association has been Helping Farmers Succeed.*

"I share about what happens on my farm to a consumer audience to nurture trust and understanding."

Andrashewski and McClean are two farmers featured in the Agriculture Day video. To see the video and share it with your community, go to [canolaeatwell.com](https://canolaeatwell.com).

The Canola Eat Well joint effort is part of the provincial canola organizations' mandates to actively facilitate market development initiatives in Canada. Across the Prairies, market development programming is about maintenance and awareness, while a targeted market development program in Ontario is about increasing awareness and demand among consumers in that growth market. ✿

*—Ellen Pruden is the Canola Eat Well director for Manitoba Canola Growers. Canola Eat Well, a partnership of provincial canola organizations, does canola oil market development for consumers in Canada. Find out more at [canolaeatwell.com](https://canolaeatwell.com).*





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# How will COVID-19 change the way you farm?

The pandemic has uncovered cracks that were already present in our agricultural sector. Light shining through those cracks has shown us ways to improve.



BY HEATHER WATSON

**I** think it's safe to say nobody saw this coming—and nobody anticipated the short- and long-term effects the pandemic would have on farmers, agriculture and society here in Canada. There have been many challenges for agriculture including supply chain relationships and the closing of processing plants, retailers and restaurants, as well as managing labour and ensuring the health and welfare of employees and the general public.

Some members of the agricultural community have commented that COVID-19 has brought to light cracks that were already present in our agricultural sector – the delicate balance between production and processing capacity, limited channels for selling and marketing products, insufficient working capital and financial planning, an insecure source of labour and inadequate internet service.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) surveyed its farmers over the first few months of the pandemic. Among the respondents, 80 per cent indicated they have experienced a change in their operations due to COVID-19, 88 per cent have experienced negative financial impacts on their farm business, and 57 per cent reporting reduced cash flow.

When asked about their top concerns, financial impacts (e.g. operations, commodity markets, liquidity and capital resources) were consistently the top concern, followed by health and safety for themselves and their staff.

Farmer mental health challenges were prominent before the pandemic. A University of Guelph study found that 45 per cent of farmers in Canada said they had high stress, while 58 per cent met the criteria for anxiety and 35 per cent for depression. The OFA survey reports farmers are more stressed and concerned about their mental health due to COVID-19. When asked about their mental health compared to last year, two-thirds of farmers (67.5 per cent) indicated they were experiencing more stress and concern

about their mental health due to COVID-19. Many farmers are taking steps to cope with the stress: 36 per cent are reaching out to peers, family and friends, 33 per cent are taking short breaks, four per cent have contacted a doctor and three per cent have called or chatted online with a mental health program or call centre.

Childcare has also surfaced as a challenge on many farms. Children require extra supervision when schools and daycares are shut. This includes support for their online learning, which is especially difficult for younger children and their parents. Something else is also happening – with students returning from college and university, farms are finding extra hands available to help with farm work. However, some students find it difficult to carve out time for their schoolwork when the farm and family are counting on their help.

## CHANGE BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES

When a change comes along that's as significant as a global pandemic where everyone is affected, there are challenges, but there are also opportunities. They say necessity is the mother of invention, and as we look around at our agriculture sector and how we are adjusting, I would say this is most certainly true!

Participation in online learning and industry events has seen a definite upswing, as many organizations and companies have taken their offerings into the virtual space. We are seeing not only increased participation, but comfort levels with online technology have increased by leaps and bounds. Participation has also become more feasible when you can access these opportunities from the comfort of your farm or office, saving time and money on travel, and opening us up to a new world of learning opportunities around the world. Of course, with more online activities comes the necessity to improve rural access to high-speed internet to take advantage of these new opportunities.



*Heather Watson is the executive director of Farm Management Canada. She says looking back at 2020, those farms who have a strategic mindset and consistently try to plan ahead had the most success.*

**With increasing comfort using online technology, some farms have taken to online sales and social media as new marketing avenues to help minimize the loss of their regular sales channels.**





Photo: iStock.com/  
Maksym Belchenko

While we mourn the loss of in-person networking and building interpersonal relations with those we typically meet at industry meetings and conferences, we are seeing some farmers and organizations embracing online technology like Zoom, Teams and WhatsApp, for example, to stay connected through online peer networks and regular online chats. Sometimes these chats are just to stay connected and don't have a specific agenda.

Will online learning and events stay, or will they be a distant memory when all of this is behind us? I believe we have found new ways to connect and learn using online technology and we will continue to do so. I think that while there is something special that happens when you can share a drink or meal with someone in-person, perhaps we will be more selective, going forward, in what requires us to travel to access learning opportunities.

With increasing comfort using online technology, some farms have taken to online sales and social media as new marketing avenues to help minimize the loss of their regular sales channels.

Farm Management Canada recently co-hosted a live Facebook session with four farmers from the Prairies, asking them to reflect on the past year and tell us about their plans for their farm businesses moving forward. Interestingly, many commented that with the reduction of in-person events and meetings, they found more time to spend working on their business, reflecting on their business practices and areas for improvement, and getting ahead in their planning.

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Looking back at 2020, where we are seeing the most success is with those farms who have a strategic mindset and consistently try to plan ahead. These are farmers who envision various scenarios for the farm and have devised a plan to account for whatever may happen. This gives them the upper hand when a crisis emerges because the plan shows a path forward when emotions run high and decision-making becomes clouded. The plan helps the farm manage uncertainty while also being poised to fast-forward when opportunities present themselves.

Reflecting on the past year's events, what worked out really well for you farm? Of those things that worked well, did they come about by design or just a little luck? What didn't go so well, and how could

you make improvements for better outcomes in the future? Is your business flexible enough to take a detour in moving toward your business goals, or are you caught on a one-way street? Have you put all your eggs in one basket, or have you diversified your risk by diversifying your strategies when it comes to suppliers, buyers, labour and finance?

One thing is certain, COVID-19 has put agriculture in the spotlight, reminding the Canadian public where their food comes from and that farmers are essential workers. It's our time to shine, and I believe we are doing just that. 🌻

—Heather Watson is the executive director of Farm Management Canada. Find FMC business planning resources at [fmc-gac.com](https://fmc-gac.com).



## What are food influencers saying?

A good way to see where food purchasing practices are going is to check on the language of food influencers. Look for food communicators with strong followings on social media, who have written best-selling books and who are featured on morning news shows and in podcasts. Also scan for comments and forecasts all the way up the supply chain. What are these influencers saying about food products and production practices?

Jane Dummer, food consultant and registered dietitian based in Canada, spoke to Canadian farm writers about COVID-19 and how it has changed consumers' behaviour and dietary patterns. For one thing, the pandemic has more people thinking about healthy eating, Dummer says. COVID-19 also forced food businesses and consumers to source food closer to home – partly by necessity because international deliveries slowed or stopped. A lingering effect could be more direct-to-consumer online sales.

In her blog article, "Sustainability is far beyond selfies with farmers," which you can find at [janedummer.com](https://janedummer.com), she wrote: "The pandemic has given us an opportunity to scrap the pre-COVID business as usual, be mindful and to make fundamental changes in the food system."

She then lists a few important themes that the canola industry is starting to talk about: "From sourcing ingredients closer to home and advancing supply chain technology, to understanding all the inputs of sustainability such as a circular approach and the importance of our workers, we have opportunities for improvements in the food system. These improvements include biodiversity, energy and water use, animal and human health, the climate, and land use for the long-term."

Dummer adds that "technology and automation may allow for large global facilities to be replaced by a smaller regional facilities that have lower costs and are more resistant to disruption in the worldwide supply chain." She says food manufacturers are considering whether they need to offer so many product variations – or stock-keeping units (SKUs). "They are looking for more flexibility to be able to adapt quickly. More SKUs equal more detailed and complex ingredient sourcing, consequently permitting higher risks when disrupted."

The grocery business is preparing for change. Shaunda Durance-Tod, a registered dietitian with CanolaInfo, shared an article, "The changing

shopper journey during a pandemic", which was posted at [westerngrocer.com](https://westerngrocer.com). The website's target audience is grocery retailers and it provides content like "how to make your store more profitable". Since the grocers' perspective should provide a message for everyone in the food supply chain, consider the article's closing message: "Be prepared to make some significant changes in your approach with more emphasis on technology and quicker decision-making. What you knew last year as it relates to the shopper has all changed."

A new report from University of Guelph professor Alfons Weersink and a long list of co-authors looked at potential pandemic fall out for North America's food supply chains. The report, "COVID-19 and the agri-food system in the United States and Canada," published in *Agricultural Systems* March 2021, says the pandemic could cause consumers to look more at local options that offer a more resilient supply. But that isn't certain. The report includes this paragraph: "During a pandemic or a recession, consumers may be less interested in certain credence attributes such as how the food was grown (i.e. organic) or where (i.e. local). However, consumer behaviour may also change in favour of local food if they view these sources of supply to be more resilient in uncertain markets. The potential change in the food supply chain to a more local and more resilient system depends ultimately on whether consumers are willing to pay for this credence attribute."

—Jay Whetter

## Agriculture key pillar in post-COVID recovery

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), a federal government ministry, released a report called *Restart, recover and reimagine prosperity for all Canadians* that outlines "an ambitious growth plan for building a digital, sustainable and innovative economy".

Agriculture and food represent the fourth of four key pillars. This is the lead paragraph under the pillar four heading: "Leverage Canada's agri-food production and value-added processing, endowment in natural resources, and strengths in AI to become a global leader in precision agriculture, leading to a sustainable, traceable and safe food system supplying high-quality products, including processed food, to local and global markets."

Search for the report at [ic.gc.ca](https://ic.gc.ca).



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With travel restrictions due to COVID-19, how do you do a trade mission? Virtually, of course. The Canola Council of Canada held its first online trade mission, hosting a South Korean delegation on January 11.

# CCC HOSTS VIRTUAL TRADE MISSION

BY BRITTANY DYCK

**S**outh Korea is the third biggest market for Canadian canola oil exports, and the country of 50 million people could be in a position to buy even more. The Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement was signed in 2015, and since then South Korean tariffs on Canadian canola have been coming down step by step. On January 1, 2021, the tariff on crude canola oil was eliminated, meaning that South Korea no longer has any tariffs on Canadian canola products.

“Removal of the balance of the tariff continues to elevate South Korea as an extremely valuable trading partner for Canadian canola,” says Jeff Pleskach, merchandising manager for Cargill and Canola Council of Canada (CCC) board director.

To build on this potential, the CCC had planned to host a Korean delegation for a Canadian canola tour in 2020, but the pandemic made that impossible. So the CCC worked on the next best option – a virtual tour. The mission was carried out by the CCC with funding support provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The agenda was condensed into two hours, with presentations in English with Korean translation.

It was an engaging session with representatives from four South Korea companies that either currently purchase or are interested in purchasing canola oil from Canada. These companies showed enthusiasm to gain more information on canola quality, reliable supply and the industry’s plans for growth.

The agenda included presentations on canola production and processing from Pleskach and fellow CCC board member Ryan Law, who is the canola commercial manager with Bunge. Shaunda Durance-Tod, CanolaInfo manager, talked about the health and functional benefits of canola oil, mentioning its very low saturated fat content and high functionality in restaurant fryers and processed food. Clint



*Nicolea Dow talks about the importance of trade in this video. Without being able to tour a farm in person, a video was prepared to give the South Korean customers a connection to a canola farmer.*

Jurke, CCC agronomy director, talked about Canadian canola industry goals to produce an ecologically sustainable crop by improving soil and water quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing biodiversity. CCC board chair Charlene Bradley, who is also a director SaskCanola, and Nicolea Dow, Manitoba Canola Growers director, provided the farm perspectives.

Xuguang Huang, Canada’s Trade Commissioner in South Korea, also participated. “The best way to grow the business for Canadian canola in Korea is to develop new channels for the use of canola oil,” Huang says, adding that the food service industry and the biofuels sector may be potential growth areas. He gave one specific example. “I’d like to see more food service companies using canola oil for fried chicken, which is a very popular food in South Korea.”

Some of the Korean participants asked how canola oil could be more competitive in terms of price. Pleskach answered: “Canola oil tends to be at the higher end of the range given the value it provides,” he says. “The goal in South Korea is to unlock that value.”





# Top Science for the Bottom Line

Visit the Canola Research Hub at  
[canolaresearch.ca](http://canolaresearch.ca) for reports on  
the latest Canadian canola research.

“Continuing to connect with our global customers during this pandemic has been important to our industry. The desire to stay connected and share information comes from both sides, and this was reflected in the participation and engagement during the session.”

-Jim Everson

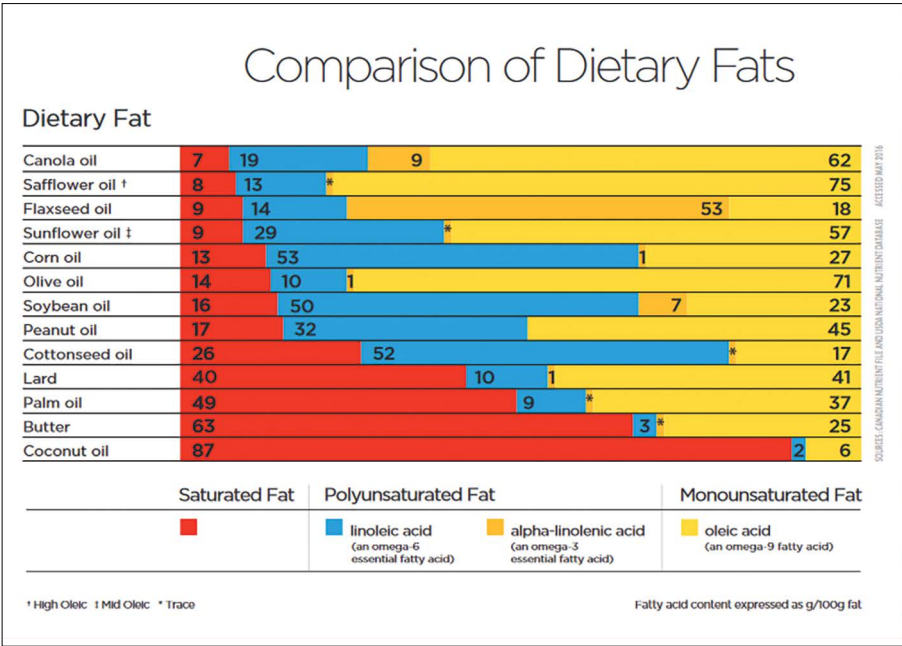
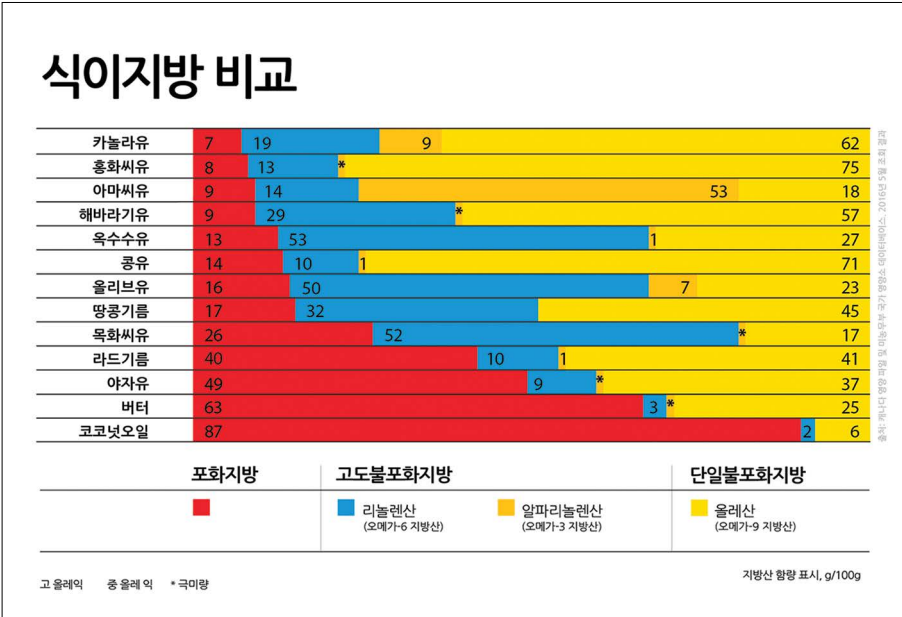
When asked why is it important for farmers to always keep in mind their customers, like the processors and consumers in South Korea, Nicolea Dow answered: “One of the greatest challenges canola farmers had over the past few years was profitability, which was related to global market access. For our business and our ability to make a profit, it is extremely important to meet the demands of our export markets.”

Jim Everson, president of the CCC, remarked on the virtual trade missions. “Continuing to connect with our global customers during this pandemic has been important to our industry. The desire to stay connected and share information comes from both sides, and this was reflected in the participation and engagement during the session.”

While face to face meetings allow for a more in-depth experience for our customers, the virtual trade mission did work to keep the conversation going in the midst of pandemic-related travel restrictions. When this pandemic is over, we will probably see a combination of virtual and in-person missions to share the benefits of our safe and healthy canola products and Canada’s world-class canola supply chain. ✿

-Brittany Dyck is senior manager canola utilization for the Canola Council of Canada.

Here are two version of the dietary fats comparison charts used to promote canola oil. The bottom is the standard English version. The top shows what it looks like in Korean.



## Free Trade helps

Tariffs have hampered canola seed and oil exports to South Korea in the past. The Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, which came into force on January 1, 2015, puts Canadian canola on a level playing field with other oilseeds. In 2019, Canadian canola oil exports to South Korea reached 153,000 tonnes with a value of \$147 million. In 2020, over 126,000 tonnes valued at \$131 million was exported.





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