

# Wild Rose



# News

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## President's Report

by  
**BILL DOBSON**

*"The good ones are the hard ones to get...."*

I recall hearing the old farmers saying that when I was a kid. They were trying to put a dose of reality on people's enthusiasm over bumper crops. We experienced a variety of difficulties this year. Scattered frost, September rains and an early snowstorm in northern Alberta made harvest fairly challenging. There will be a fair bit of feed wheat which never seems to be easy to market and malt barley may be a scarce commodity. The BSE issue drags on with no apparent end in sight and oil prices are skyrocketing which can't be good for agriculture as well. **The challenges never seem to quit coming at us!**

### BSE Issue

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the Canadian and Alberta governments announced assistance plans to address the BSE issue and position the industry to move forward with or without the reopening of the American border. There was considerable consultation with the in-

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## **President's Report - Cont'd**

dustry and farm groups during the development of this program. The announcement emphasized that seeking the full opening of the US border needs to be a top priority. Other components of the announcement are a set aside program for feeder and fed cattle, a loan loss reserve for those setting up new slaughtering facilities, vague reference to a cull program and the seeking of new non-US foreign markets. Other provinces have been quick to participate in this program which speaks to the significance of this problem. The set aside program is aimed at keeping prices stable which will allow producers to recover a reasonable amount of income from the marketplace. Hopefully, there will be utilization of the program and the results will be positive. Trying to manage supply when the product is alive and possibly ready for market is pretty inefficient and expensive. Obviously if the border is not fully opened over the next year there will have to be a drastic adjustment in numbers.

It has been encouraging to see producers attempting to set up co-operative type packing plants. Apparently the loan loss reserve has not been that well received by lenders and perhaps a more solid guarantee would be far more helpful. The solutions are not simple to address this crisis and there is an ongoing need for producers, commodity and farm groups and governments to work together to ride this one out.

### **CAIS Update**

Many producers have expressed their frustrations with the CAIS program. The program has had reasonably good enrollment with most producers opting for optimum coverage. CFA President Bob Friesen, recently met with Canadian agricultural ministers and reiterated our position there should be no producer deposit requirement for the program. Although the ministers agreed that it is a huge tie-up of capital, they are still adamant that there is a need for meaningful producer participation in the program. It is encouraging that there will be industry input into a CAIS review and hopefully Wild Rose Agricultural Producers will be a part of that process.

### **Canadian Wheat Board**

The CWB elections will take place this fall in the districts represented by Jim Chatenay and Ken Ritter. There will no doubt be an active and lively campaign and I encourage producers to attend a forum to listen to their candidates. Wild Rose Agricultural Producers will be meeting with the Board in Regina on October 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss a variety of issues including the governance of the CWB, possible loss of federal guarantee as a result of WTO talk and grain transportation. Wild Rose's position on the future of the CWB is that producers need to be the ones to decide the future of the Board. Producers need to be well informed on the operations of the CWB and the implications of changes that they might advocate. I have written Minister Alcock suggesting that it might be wise to review the governance and election procedures to insure that the process is as clean as possible and clearly represents the views of western Canadian producers.

### **Provincial Election**

We will obviously soon be in the midst of a provincial election campaign. As the population of the province grows and the oil and gas sectors flourish, there is always a danger that agriculture could become less significant to the government. It is important that we remind all politicians of the importance of our industry. The province has always been supportive of agriculture and we would hope that will continue.

### **Regional and Annual Meetings of WRAP**

Finally, I would like to encourage all producers to attend the Regional meeting in your area and our Annual Meeting, which will be held in Nisku on January 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005. It is very important to have widespread input into the development of our policy if we are going to represent the views of the majority of Alberta's agricultural producers. Details of the annual convention will be in this edition of Wild Rose News. I hope to see you there and get a chance to discuss any issues that are on your mind.

## Pre-publication Offer for the Second Edition of Our Popular Book "When the Oilpatch Comes to Your Backyard: A Citizens' Guide"

*Pre-publication announcement: Completely revised and updated, the second edition of this popular Pembina Institute guide provides landowners, tenants and those living near oil and gas developments with the information and tools they need when dealing with the oil and gas industry in Alberta.*

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4.Order by telephone @ 780-542-6272, being sure to have your VISA or MasterCard ready.

# Wild Rose Agricultural Producers

## Agricultural Policy Horizons 2005

### January 6, 2005—Day One Seminars

8:00–8:30	<u>Registration and coffee</u>
8:30–9:00	<u>Introduction and welcome</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bill Dobson, President, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers</li></ul>
9:00–10:00	<u>"Agricultural Trade with the Americans—The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jack Moerman, President, Alberta Pork</li><li>• Greg Porozni, Board Member, Alberta Grain Commission</li><li>• Darcy Davis, Vice President, Alberta Beef Producers</li></ul>
10:00–10:35	<u>"Communicating Rural Issues to the Urban Public"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Max Fritz, Agricultural Manager, Calgary Stampede</li></ul>
10:35–10:50	Coffee Break
10:50–11:30	<u>"Meeting Agriculture's Needs through Alberta's Water Use Policy"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Barry Worbets, Senior Fellow, Canada West Foundation</li></ul>
11:30–12:10	<u>"NAFTA - What Impact does it have on Agricultural Commodities"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wendy Holm, Consulting Agrologist &amp; Canadian Farm Writers Award Winner</li></ul>
12:10–1:10	Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hon. Andy Mitchell, Minister, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (invited)</li></ul>
1:10–2:00	<u>"WTO, What You Need to Know"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Andree Houde, Director, Multinational Trade Policy, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada</li></ul>
2:00 -2:45	<u>"The APF and Business Risk Management—What Governments should do and what Producers need to do"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bob Friesen, President, Canadian Federation of Agriculture</li><li>• Laurent Pellerin, President, L'Union des Producteurs Agricoles</li></ul>
2:45–3:00	Coffee
3:00 - 3:40	<u>"Preparing for the Future: The WTO and Supply Management"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Darrell Toma, Consultant, Toma &amp; Bouma</li></ul>
3:40 - 4:20	<u>"BSE Testing in 2005 and Beyond - Meeting our Obligations"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Gerald Ollis, Chief Provincial Veterinarian, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development</li></ul>
4:30	Wrap-Up

# Agricultural Policy Horizons 2005

## January 6 & 7, 2005— Banquet and Day Two AGM

Thursday, January 6, 2005

6:30 p.m.	Opening Remarks -Bill Dobson , President, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers and Introduction of Master of Ceremony, <b>Chris Sheetz</b> , KISN-FM Radio host Introduction of Guests
6:45	<b>Guest Speakers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ken Ritter, Chairman, Canadian Wheat Board</b></li></ul>
7:30	Banquet Social Silent Auction

Friday, January 7, 2005 - Day 2

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:45	Welcome and Call to Order - Bill Dobson Approval and/ or Additions to the Agenda Call for acceptance of the Minutes of the Eighth Annual Convention as circulated Nominations Open President's Report - Bill Dobson
9:10	Board of Directors Report - Keith Degenhardt/Terry Murray
9:20	Executive Director's report
9:25	Financial Report - (Financial Review conducted by Colleen Ewashko of C. Ewashko Accounting) presented by Rod Scarlett Motion to Approve Submitted Financial Statements Motion for the Ratification of the actions of the 2004/2005 Board of Directors
9:30	Discussion and voting on 2005 Resolutions
10:30	Coffee Break
10:45	Update from CN Rail—Speaker to be announced
11:15	Discussion and voting on 2005 Resolutions - continued
12:15 p.m.	Nominations For the Board of Directors Close Lunch Q &A Guest Panel <b>Bob Friesen and Laurent Pellerin</b>
12:30	Close of Resolutions
1:15	Presentations/Election of 2005/2006 Board of Directors (if necessary)
1:30	Discussion and voting on 2005 Resolutions - continued
1:45	Election Closes
2:00	Election Results
2:30	Coffee Break Board Meeting
3:30	Executive Announced Discussion and voting on 2005 Resolutions - continued
4:00	New Business
	Summary President Elect
4:45	Motion to Adjourn

**WILD ROSE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS**  
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## WILD ROSE

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**Wild Rose Agricultural Producers**  
**Presents the Founding Convention of the**  
**Alberta Young Farmers Forum**  
**Agricultural Policy Horizons 2005**  
**January 6, 2005 - Day 1**

8:00–8:30	<u>Registration and coffee</u>
8:30–9:00	<u>Introduction and welcome</u> · Bill Dobson, President, Wild Rose Agricultural Producers
9:00–9:30	<u>Young Farmers Clubs</u> · Dr. Mick Price, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta
9:30–10:00	<u>Futures in Agriculture</u> · Dr. John Kennelly, Dean of Agriculture, University of Alberta
10:00–10:35	<u>"Communicating Rural Issues to the Urban Public"</u> · Max Fritz, Agricultural Manager, Calgary Stampede
10:35–10:50	Coffee Break
10:50–11:30	<u>Developing Applicable Safe Water Practices</u> · Sarah Depoe, Water Conservation Specialist, Alberta Agriculture
11:30–12:10	<u>Rangeland Conservation</u> · Dr. Edward Bork, Rangeland Specialist, University of Alberta
12:10–1:10	Lunch Hon. Andy Mitchell, Minister, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (invited)
1:10–2:00	<u>Direct Farm Marketing and You</u> · Rod Carlyon, Alberta Agriculture
2:00 -2:45	<u>"The APF and Business Risk Management—What Governments should do and what Producers need to do"</u> · Bob Friesen, President, Canadian Federation of Agriculture · Laurent Pellerin, President, L'Union des Producteurs Agricoles
2:45–3:00	Coffee
3:00 - 3:40	<u>"Preparing for the Future: The WTO and Supply Management"</u> · Darrell Toma, Consultant, Toma & Bouma
3:40 - 4:20	<u>"BSE Testing in 2005 and Beyond - Meeting our Obligations"</u> · Dr. Gerald Ollis, Chief Provincial Veterinarian, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
4:20 -5:00	Adoption of By-laws and Election of Officers for Alberta Young Farmers Forum

## What BSE is doing to Agriculture

### By Brent McBean, WRAP Board Member

The BSE crisis in Canada is into its 17<sup>th</sup> month. Each of us very likely can think of what this crisis has done to our livelihoods and our operations. But how many of us have actually stopped and looked at what this is doing to producers in other sectors. If you want to believe statistics, here's an interesting one. Which livestock sector has been hurt the most by the BSE situation in Canada? Beef right??? Well, according to the Canadian Sheep Federation first quarter receipts in that sector have dropped by 42 percent while beef receipts are down by 36 percent. The reasons are exactly the same as we've been hearing from the cattle sector, loss of access to the US market and a lack of slaughter capacity in Canada.

Why is it that we haven't been seeing the sheep producers on the news? It's not because these producers aren't hurting any less. If this study is correct they could be hurting more. It appears that because the dollars being lost total far more in the beef sector, and because they are a larger commodity organization, that's where the attention has been focused, leaving other commodity groups being sideswiped by this issue on the periphery, not only in media coverage, but in discussions with various levels of government on what role government can and should be taking in this situation. Who's job is it to ensure the sheep producers get fair and equitable input into this issue so the sheep producers and others affected during this time don't get marginalized and unheard during the process. Well it is the Sheep Federation themselves, right?

At Wild Rose Agricultural Producers we have a somewhat differing viewpoint. According to the Alberta Agriculture's web site there are 19 Agricultural marketing boards and commissions currently operating in Alberta, all operating on behalf of their own industry's needs and trying to encourage growth and positive economic returns to the members of their own commodity group. While Wild Rose fully supports and recognizes the value and need for each commodity group having their own board, we ask the question, do these groups have a responsibility to agriculture as a whole in the province or just to their specific commodity?

There is a need and a responsibility that these commissions are not fulfilling and that is the recognition that a strong vibrant and diverse agricultural sector is the safest and most foolproof way to ensure a strong healthy and

forward moving agricultural sector in Alberta. And in having that we need a process that reflects the needs of the industry as a whole and not the needs of a specific group or groups. It is counter-productive to have a shotgun approach to problems that affect the industry as a whole; with a whole myriad of groups on top of the marketing boards as well purporting to speak for the needs, wants, and wishes of agriculture in this province. Each group, often working at cross purposes on the same issue, and sometimes even equally as frustrating, working on the same issue in the same direction as other groups, are using time and energy, that, if put together could be much wiser and in the end more effective in presenting all their views. The result is a cacophony of voices all trying to speak to decision makers at the different levels, each trying to make their voices heard above the other, and at times the groups that make the loudest noise are not necessarily the one with the best interests of the complete agricultural industry at heart.

Isn't it time for the leaders of the differing organizations in Alberta to consider moving past where we are at today? To begin in some way, to endeavor to improve communications within the industry groups, perhaps begin a process towards where and when an issue affects the industry at a greater scale and develop a way that is able to leave partisanship and self interest behind. One that can deal with the best interests of agriculture at heart and to work together across commodity and organizational lines. There is an amazing level of intelligence spread out amongst the various organizations. It might be surprising to find where the solutions or processes towards solutions might come from. We are not talking about a new idea here, or a new organization, just a simple level of communication amongst equals and not a structure formed by the very people that we are trying to communicate to, but one put in place by the producers and the organizations themselves. A difficult challenge, one that would require strong leadership and a lack of egos from those who think this is a good thing, but with all that we as producers and producers organizations face and conquer on a day-to-day basis on our own operations and in our own organizations, one that can be achieved, and one that should be seriously looked at for the best interests of all agriculture in Alberta.

# GMO antipathy may hurt biotechnology research in Canada

Europe's hard line has created a waiting game for major grain exporters aiming to tap the potential in genetically modified crops. But that doesn't mean Canada should back off on this and other aspects of biotechnology in the research arena, cautions a Canadian grains research leader.

"We've been sideswiped by the whole consumer / GMO issue," says Dr. Bill Scowcroft, Director of the Grain Research Laboratory of the Canadian Grain Commission. "As a consequence, there's a danger that funding for this type of research, and for biotechnology research as a whole, can be affected."

Monsanto Canada's decision to suspend its registration pursuit for Round-up Ready wheat is the type of development that spurs national media attention and rural coffee shop talk about genetically modified organism (GMO) grain crops. However, often lost in this debate is the broad future potential of GMOs, other aspects of biotechnology and the importance of keeping Canada's options open with ongoing research progress, says Scowcroft.

To date, nearly all Canadian biotechnology research in grains has focused on understanding gene function and on implementing techniques to improve the efficiency of conventional crop breeding.

"Much of the biotechnology we need is not GMO crops," says Scowcroft. "It's using this technology to understand more about gene function, so that we can tailor make the naturally occurring genes we need into a better format. The fact that a lot of

this science can be affected is a sad consequence of the antipathy to GMO products."

More of Scowcrofts' perspective on the issue is available in a new article on the Meristem Land and Science Web site, [www.meristem.com](http://www.meristem.com). Land and Science is a service featuring information on the sustainability of agriculture, food production and the environment. It is presented by Meristem Information Resources Ltd., in co-operation with partners in agriculture, food, environment and life sciences.

The current edition of Land and Science also includes several other new articles. An article on the power of composting looks at three examples of innovative demonstration projects across Canada, which illustrate how composting continues to expand in potential and importance. Poultry manure is combined with yard wastes in B.C.'s lower mainland, fish and crab offal are blended with poultry manure in Newfoundland and volcanic minerals are mixed with dry feedlot manure in Alberta.

The site also includes items on new hope against Fusarium Head Blight in barley, the benefits of sunflower oil for beef and a "piggy back" approach to livestock vaccines. Meristem Land and Science, anchored at [www.meristem.com](http://www.meristem.com), features "Progress and perspective from the best minds in agriculture, food and the environment."

For more information, contact:  
Brad Brinkworth, Senior Editor  
Meristem Information Resources Ltd.,  
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# Third Quarter Report of the Grain Monitor for the 2003-04 Crop Year.

## Grain Production and Supply

As stated in previous reports, the overall grain production for the 2003-04 crop year climbed to 47.7 million tonnes—a gain of 51.1% over that of the 2002-03 crop year. In conjunction with 5.5 million tonnes in carry-forward stocks, the overall volume of grain made available for movement during the 2003-04 crop year totaled 53.1 million tonnes - some 15.5 million tonnes (or 41.3%) more than in the 2002-03 crop year.

## Railway Traffic

Railway movements during the first nine months of the crop year increased by 71.7% over the same period a year earlier to 14.9 million tonnes, reflecting the greater volume of grain available for movement. Traffic to all Western Canadian ports experienced an increase. Volume to Vancouver increased by 178.1% to 8.3 million tonnes, reflecting the settlement of the labour dispute that had disrupted movements in the previous crop year. Prince Rupert volume fell by 2.2 million tonnes (8.6%) to 1.9 million tonnes. Volume to Thunder Bay increased 27.0% to 4.3 million tonnes. Churchill volume increased by 111.8% to 0.4 million tonnes.

## Country Elevator Infrastructure

Rationalization efforts of the major grain companies appear to have moderated significantly, with the number of country elevators falling only 2.6% to 405 and elevator storage capacity falling by 0.8% to 5.7 million tonnes. This is in sharp contrast to the extensive efforts realized over the ten years. This is also seen in the number of grain delivery points, which was reduced by 1.4% to 287. Elevators capable of loading in blocks of 25 or more cars fell by five to 264, which accounts for 65.2% of total GHTS elevators and 87.5% of the primary storage capacity.

## Railway Infrastructure

The Western Canadian rail network was reduced by 0.3% to 18,860 route-miles reflecting the abandonment of 64.0 route-miles belonging to the Southern Manitoba Railway. The abandonment of another 65.1 route-miles by CP is pending. The Great Western Railway placed its 329.1-route-mile operation up for sale in the second quarter, with local farmers mounting an effort to purchase the line. This transaction is contingent on financing and negotiations continue. CN's successful bid to purchase BC Rail, in a deal valued at \$1.0 billion, is well into the implementation stages.

## Canadian Wheat Board Transportation Programs

The changes brought forward by the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) to the tendering program appear to be working well so far. These changes committed to moving a fixed 40% of its overall grain movements to western ports under a program that combined tendering as well as advance car awards, with tendering itself constituting a maximum of 20% of the overall movement. In the first nine months of the 2003-04 crop year, 158 tender calls were issued for the movement of 2.0 million tonnes to export positions in Western Canada. In answer to these calls, 1,514 bids were received offering an aggregated 8.2 million tonnes. This high response rate denoted a heightened competition between grain companies. The CWB awarded 330 contracts for the movement of 1.7 million tonnes, which represented 19.5% of volume shipped by CWB to port positions in Western Canada. Tenders for 10.4% of the tonnage called were either partially or not filled at all. The proportion of tendered grain volume moving in multiple car blocks increased slightly to 94.0% and the proportion moving in blocks of 50 or more cars climbed to 70.9% from 62.1% the previous year. 85.4% of all tendered movements originated at high-throughput elevators, which is marginally higher than the 83.0% observed in the 2002-03 crop year. The aggressiveness of bid responses seen in the first six months of

## Grain Monitoring Program—cont'd

the crop year continued into the third quarter. The maximum accepted bids for both wheat and durum - which averaged \$23.04 per tonne and \$24.07 per tonne respectively, continue to be more than one-third higher than the maximums for the entire 2002-03 crop year. The Transportation Savings generated by the CWB during the first nine months of this crop year reached \$36.3 million - a full \$14.8 million (or 40.8%) more than the \$21.5 million recorded for the same period a year earlier. This came despite not only a 60% rollback in the percentage of grain to be moved under tender, but a 33.5% decline in the volume of grain moved under tender during the first nine month period - 1.7 million tonnes versus 2.6 million tonnes the year before.

This quarter's report sees the introduction of measures on the CWB's advance car awards program. Grain companies moved 1.1 million tonnes of grain under the program, representing 12.1% of volume shipped by CWB to port positions in Western Canada. This program came into effect late in the first quarter, resulting in a shortfall from the prescribed level. Some 81% of all advance-car-award movements are originated at high-throughput elevators - similar to that of tendered grain with 80.8% of that volume moving in multiple car blocks - noticeably less than that of tendered grain. This is largely driven by a smaller average car block size of 24.1 cars. The average car cycle of 15.4 days similar to tendered grain's average of 15.7 days. At the end of the first nine months of the 2003-04 crop year, tendered and advance-car-award shipments accounted for 31.6% of all CWB movements in Western Canada.

### Ocean Freight Rates

Ocean freight rates remained extremely high into the third quarter of this crop year and continued to have a significant impact on the export pro-

grams for CWB and non-CWB grains and added significantly to the cost of Canadian grain. While some decline had been seen by the end of the third quarter, rates remain at a level almost four times greater than those seen 24 months ago. The impact of changing ocean freight rates appears to have economically influenced the mode of transport used to move grain. As an example, Canadian grain exports to Mexico have traditionally employed ocean-going vessels in southbound movements from west coast ports, about 1.5 million tonnes annually. The rise in ocean freight rates - particularly during the first half of the current crop year - appears to have eroded the economic advantage that usually favoured marine transportation in servicing the Mexican market and by the end of the third quarter, the direct-rail movement of Canadian grain to Mexico had reached over 0.7 million tonnes - more than twice that of the previous crop year. Similarly, an increase in the spread between benchmark ocean freight rates from the US to Japan gave temporary favour to the railway delivery of grain to the Pacific Northwest rather than the Gulf of Mexico. The ramifications of this change in logistics patterns and the expected increase in car cycle time can be seen most predominantly in the capacity of the rail car fleet in Western Canada and indeed across North America. (This quarter's report contains an extended discussion on issues related to the impact of ocean freight increases on railcar supply).

### Rail Operations

Hard-hit by adverse winter operating conditions, CP embargoed grain traffic to the west coast in late January 2004. Despite these problems, the average car cycle decreased by 16.3% to 16.9 days during the first nine months of the crop year. This reduction reflected the effects of increased grain volumes, from Saskatchewan in particular and a greater concentration of comparatively shorter-haul movements from Alberta and Manitoba to export positions at port. The proportion of grain traffic moving under incentive programs climbed marginally to 75.4% in the first nine months. This was

## Grain Monitoring Program—cont'd

(Continued from page 11)

impacted by a restructuring of the railways' incentive programs, which saw CN eliminating all discounts for movements in blocks of 25-49 railcars, and CP significantly increased the discounts for movements in 100 or more railcars. This greatly aided in the continued migration towards movements in blocks of 100 or more cars where the year-to-date proportion rises to 25.1% from the 2002-03 crop year's 19.2% average. Railway incentive payments are estimated at \$49.1 million for the first nine months - up 92.8% - reflecting the effect of increased grain volumes and higher discounts. The average-earned discount reached \$4.56 per tonne.

### Producer Cars

Producer-car loading increased in the first nine months to 6,028 railcars, some 221% high than the same period the year before. Car supply appeared to be the chief limitation to greater growth.

### The Supply Chain

The amount of time being taken by grain in its movement through the supply chain during the first nine months of the 2003-04 crop year averaged 68.3, showing a marked improvement from the average of 79.7 days experienced in the 2002-03 crop year.

The report can be downloaded from the Grain Monitors web site at [www.quorumcorp.net/papers.html](http://www.quorumcorp.net/papers.html) The report is in two sections - (1) The Summary Report - which contains the summary of the measures and the Grain Monitors assessment of the GHTS in the first quarter - and (2) The Tables section, which contains the detailed measures in tables format. Other released studies that can found in the Papers directory include Monitoring Producer Netback and Monitoring Other Producer Impacts.

For more information on the Q2 2003-04 Report of the Grain Monitor, Quorum Corporation or the Grain Monitoring Program contact: Mark Hemmes, Bruce McFadden or Marcel Beaulieu at: Quorum Corporation, (780) 447-2111



We have moved!  
Our new office location is:  
**#102, 115 Portage Close  
Sherwood Park, Alberta.  
T8H 2R5**

New phone: 780-416-6530  
New fax: 780-416-6531

\*Many thanks to our new landlord,  
The Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops Ltd.





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## It's better to be safe than sorry

**H**ave you ever looked at something, nodded your head and said to yourself, "Now there's an accident waiting to happen!" Some risks are obvious. Others lurk undetected in the background. Year after year, we read or hear about tragic farming accidents, disease, and natural disasters. From defective wiring and ornery animals to faulty machinery and deadly fumes, farming has always been a risky business. Oxford defines risk as the "chance or possibility of danger, loss, injury, or other adverse consequence." In agriculture, we define risk as an uncertain outcome with potentially undesirable results.

**Can you prevent an accident before it happens?** Effective risk management is a lot like getting your business degree in Murphy's Law. That is, if anything can go wrong, it will go wrong. Managing risk involves anticipating all possible problems and making plans to reduce their potential impact on the success of your business. Essentially, you're problem-solving in the future tense. Those few ounces of prevention could save you some major headaches and money down the road.

The first step in risk management is to identify your business goals. Those goals should take into account succession planning and the need for stable income. This type of goal-setting will help you build the framework for examining the acceptable level of risk for your business. How you balance risk and reward is also affected by your own risk tolerance level.

Your insurance company can help with the inspection of your premises, assessment of your operations, and recommendations for safeguarding employees, buildings and goods. In many cases, commercial insurers provide essential engineering and safety services, with the service fee included in the premium. You and your insurer both have a vested interest in minimizing the frequency and severity of losses. When you use a risk management program, you're using the same loss reduction and cost control mechanisms that large companies use to save money and increase competitiveness. A risk management program will also give you peace of mind. So talk to your insurance agent to find out how you can develop a risk management program for your farming operation. Because, as we all know, it's better to be safe than sorry.

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

## YES! I wish to join Wild Rose Agricultural Producers



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# Environmental program benefits farmers in successful second year

**A**lberta's farm community has moved more than 1,500 steps closer to enhanced environmental stewardship since April 2003. That's the number of farm units that have taken part in a free, confidential, risk assessment workshop offered by the non-profit Alberta Environmental Farm Plan Company (AEFP) in their second year of providing services.

Since the program started, more than 300 Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) workshops have been held across the province. Trained facilitators with farming backgrounds lead the sessions in which participants work through a comprehensive workbook. After the first of the two program workshops, participants go back to their farms or ranches and assess their environmental risks and opportunities. They then attend the second workshop to create a plan of action to enhance their operations.

"EFPs are beneficial for farmers in their day-to-day management and it's also a good way for the industry to show the public it cares about stewardship of Alberta's land and resources," explains Mike Slomp, the company's executive director.

Bill Fox, an Elk Point area farmer who participated in EFP workshops held in the Municipal District of Bonnyville, says the program gives farmers a lot to think about. "The EFP workbook has a lot of ideas for being better managers of the land and it was good to be in the workshops with other local farmers and bounce ideas off one another."

Fox, who has been raising cattle, grain and hay for 40 years adds, "I think most farmers are already doing most things right, but if you make even a few little changes in your operation because of the EFP program, by the end of the day, you've made a noticeable improvement."

Slomp is optimistic about the future of the pro-

gram. "Based on the great response and commitment of producers this past year, we hope to have another 2,000 farm units participate in the program by March 2005," he says. "Plans are well underway to conduct another round of free, confidential workshops in every corner of the province beginning later this fall."

Through the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), the Government of Canada will invest \$48.8 million in Alberta, with the provincial government providing an additional \$32.6 million of in-kind support services to help the agricultural sector develop and implement environmental farm plans. The APF is an agreement among the federal, provincial and territorial governments to position Canada as the world leader in environmentally responsible agricultural production.

Additional support has been provided by the Agriculture and Food Council, through the Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Initiative; the Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Council and various ministries of the Government of Alberta. Contributions have also come from more than 100 local municipalities, businesses and agricultural organizations.

Workshop dates and locations will be advertised in local newspapers, but producers are also invited to call the AEFP office for details about upcoming workshops in their area. For more information on the environmental farm plan program, contact The AEFP Company toll-free at 1-866-844-2337 or visit the Web site at [www.albertaefp.com](http://www.albertaefp.com).

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For more information, please contact:

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