



# WHEAT REPORT



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



**Kent Erickson**  
**Chairman**

It is important to have an annual strategic crop and marketing plan as we approach the 2014 growing season.

Growers have enjoyed profitable farm returns for the past few years, and marketing has been simple—just wait for higher prices. This year, higher yields may help offset tapering markets, but only if there is a buyer who can provide movement.

Growers sometimes forget to look at profit and not just price—you need to know your cost of production in order to sell at a profitable price.

On the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) website, in the Production section there are links to free and valuable calculators and tools for growers. One very important tool is the Crop Enterprise Cost and Return Calculator from Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. This calculator helps growers estimate costs and revenues on a per-acre basis for a set of selected crops within a given soil zone. Ultimately, knowing the cost of production is vital to creating value on the farm.

Similar to the way growers are preparing for the upcoming growing season, the staff at AWC is also preparing for a busy season ahead. The AWC Research Committee is currently reviewing research proposals from the Agricultural Funding Consortium, with final funding decisions on the proposals set to be completed by March 3, 2014. Once completed, AWC will be funding up to 15 new research

projects in the areas of agronomy and breeding.

Staff have also been attending a number of trade shows to share information about AWC and to talk to growers about where they want to see the Commission go. In the future, the AWC Board of Directors' key priorities will be carried out by staff as we approach a new growing season.

We will be involved in a number of extension activities this summer.

The AWC will also be participating with Real Agriculture on the Wheat School, a video series for western grain farmers. Wheat School will focus on wheat-related agronomy topics such as diseases and pests, research and breeding. Watch for information about its launch on our website.

Finally, the marketing program will ramp up efforts to provide a variety of tools and information for crop marketing at the end of harvest.

Have a great growing season!

## STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

**P**artnerships are an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to the success of an organization. One of the Alberta Wheat Commission's (AWC) strategic goals is to collaborate and partner with like-minded organizations—like the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC).

The GGC represents farmers all across Canada with a mandate to influence federal policy on behalf of independent grain farmers and their respective grower associations and commissions. The GGC and the AWC share a similar vision—to provide opportunity for Canadian agriculture to achieve its potential. Much like the AWC, the GGC believes Canadian growers are efficient, competitive

and want to make their living from the marketplace. Profitability for growers is a main priority for the industry as a whole.

As a member of the GGC, the AWC appoints a director to the GGC Board, from which a five-person executive committee is elected each year. In December 2013, AWC director Gary Stanford was named the president of this committee, and the organization. Having one of our directors lead the GGC is a great opportunity to ensure the interests of wheat growers will be represented, and that Canadian wheat will maintain its global competitiveness.

The AWC has also been working with the GGC on a number of marketing initiatives. In December 2013, the federal government made a \$100,000 investment to the GGC to open up global markets and increase access to international markets for Canadian wheat. Working closely



President of the GGC board, Gary Stanford.

with AWC staff, the GGC will use this funding to develop a national wheat marketing plan, and to co-ordinate trade missions that will take producers to end markets and create business relationships with the buyers purchasing Canadian agriculture products.

Partnering with the GGC and working with all members of the value chain to promote opportunities for Canadian agriculture is a perfect fit to help the AWC achieve its strategic goals.

## WHEAT WORLD

### Upcoming Events

**C**ome visit the AWC staff at our trade show booth at Aggie Days in Calgary from April 9 to 13, and in Lethbridge from April 23 to 24.

**Follow the Alberta Wheat Commission on Twitter (@albertawheat) and Facebook (Alberta Wheat Commission).**



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### Alberta Wheat Commission Releases First Annual Report

**T**he Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) has published its first Annual Report. The 2012–13 Annual Report is available on the AWC website at [www.albertawheat.com](http://www.albertawheat.com). To obtain a hard copy, call the AWC office at 403-717-3711 and we would be pleased to send one in the mail.



**GROWTH.  
INNOVATION.  
RESULTS.**



# MARKET CENTS



**Jeff Jackson**  
**Interim**  
**Operations**  
**Manager**  
**and Markets**  
**Manager**

## Is Grain Transport on the Rails?

The problems and inefficiencies of rail transportation and confrontation with agriculture are nothing new. But transportation issues were at the forefront last fall due to a record harvest and the railroads' seeming inability to add capacity.

The problem is far more complex than simply beating up the railroads for inefficiency. Canada has roughly 48,000 kilometres of railway track, placing us fifth in the world for rail network size. The four countries ahead of us are the United States, China, Russia and India, all of which rank among the world's top 10 most populated countries, while Canada ranks just 37th in world population.

This past year, Western Canada produced 33 per cent more grain than the previous year, and rail shipments of grain have been down three per cent from the same time last year. This does not come across as very positive for the rail companies. However, it is unrealistic to assume that in a span of a couple months, the railroads should be able to increase capacity by 33 per cent. If they could, it would indicate that they had been operating at a significant overcapacity of infrastructure

for the past few years. No reasonable business would operate that way.

Some have pointed to crude oil as the culprit. While there has been a three per cent decrease in grain cars loaded, crude oil loading increased 26 per cent. Is crude oil really to blame for a lack of performance on the grain side?

The Port of Vancouver has 954,290 tonnes of storage, yet ships an annual average of 14.6 million tonnes of grain. Industry can build numerous oil pipelines, but a bottleneck in the system will still exist in Vancouver. It is unlikely additional storage can be built, meaning existing facilities will always need to be turned 15-plus times a year to meet demand.

The bottom line is that Canada is a resource economy. In order for ours to grow, we need to have the ability to efficiently export our agricultural commodities. There is little value in pitting grains against oil or potash. All levels of government, industry, trade associations and private businesses—including railways—must work together to create solutions.

From an agricultural perspective, millions of dollars are invested each year to

increase yield for western Canadian growers. What value does this bring if the commodities cannot be efficiently shipped?

Recently, the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) partnered on a Pulse Canada initiative seeking solutions to the transportation issues. Other partners in this are the Canadian Canola Growers Association, the Manitoba Pulse Growers, the Western Grain Elevator Association and the Inland Terminal Association. These organizations have provided funding to hold railroads accountable for their less-than-adequate service, and study the entire supply chain to find real solutions.

Unfortunately, there is no magic bullet.

## ENTER TO WIN: iPad Air

Alberta Wheat Commission would like to collect member email addresses. Provide us with your email address and be entered to win an iPad Air.

Send your contact information to [email@albertawheat.com](mailto:email@albertawheat.com) to enter.

**Contest ends June 30, 2014.**

Please note, this contest is open only to AB wheat growers who have paid check-off to AWC from August 2012 until now.



**Growth. Innovation. Results.**  
[www.albertawheat.com](http://www.albertawheat.com)

## SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH



**Lauren Comin**  
**Research  
Manager**

### *Developing Our Future Farm Leaders is Essential*

One of the Alberta Wheat Commission's (AWC) strategic priorities is to develop future farm leaders—beginning their development long before they are even able to help run the combine. The AWC has taken several approaches to agriculture education, and one of them is supporting agriculture in the classroom. It seemed like the perfect fit for AWC to partner with and support the Classroom Agriculture Program (CAP) and to become a member in the fall of 2013.

CAP has been operational since 1985, with a mandate to enhance students' understanding of agriculture and where their food comes from. By having volunteers directly involved in the agriculture industry provide in-class presentations, the program helps to foster a greater respect for the industry and the individuals who feed Alberta and the world.

"It is important for children to learn about the food they eat and where it comes from and to form that connection to agriculture because they need to understand that food doesn't originate in the grocery store," said Karen

Spelay, general manager of CAP. "It comes from plants and animals, and that is something that we may be neglecting to teach this generation of children."

CAP is funded by a variety of Alberta agricultural groups, including the crop commodity groups such as Alberta Barley, the Alberta Canola Producers Commission, the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission and the AWC. The bulk of the work, however, is carried out by volunteers.

Every year, volunteers from various facets of the industry, all with a passion for promoting agriculture, sign up to deliver one-hour presentations to Grade 4 classes across Alberta. Because of the diverse backgrounds of the volunteers, students get to learn about topics like the ins-and-outs of irrigation, veterinary treatment of dairy cows and what life is like on a wheat farm.

This year, CAP will reach 22,500 students in 945 classes—an increase of 12.5 per cent over last year. Spelay and the CAP directors hope to see the program's reach expand over the next few years.

"We plan to continue to expand the CAP program to reach up to 30,000 Grade 4 students each year in Alberta. We would also like to increase the number of volunteers we have presenting the program in order to meet this demand," explained Spelay. "Along with this expansion, CAP continues its core effort, reaching out to Grade 4 students across Alberta and sharing positive messages about agriculture."

"The CAP program actively recruits year-round. As a volunteer presenter, you also stand to gain from the experience," added CAP volunteer Darold Niwa, key account manager at United Farmers of Alberta. "We—both the students and myself—got a lot out of the sessions."

## MEET THE AWC STAFF



**Jeff Jackson**  
**Interim Operations Manager and  
Markets Manager**

Meet Jeff Jackson, Interim Operations Manager and Markets Manager at Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC). Jeff joined AWC in March 2013, after spending 20 years working in agri-business. His past career found him in sales and marketing as the Market Manager, Pulses with Scoular Canada Inc., Sales and Marketing Manager for Wigmore Farms Ltd., and as a trader responsible for domestic and European markets at Saskcan Pulse Trading.

As the AWC's Markets Manager, Jeff is responsible for executing the market development strategy. This includes the establishment and management of new marketing initiatives and programs focused on end-use demand that will increase long-term profitability for wheat growers across the province.

When not spending time with his wife and son, Jeff enjoys eating, sleeping and breathing football.

When asked if his move to Calgary means he has become a Stamps fan, he responded by saying he still bleeds green and wouldn't see it any other way. Go Roughriders!



# BARLEY REPORT



**Alberta  
Barley**

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



**Matt Sawyer**  
**Chairman**

### *Logical Logistics*

Transportation.

It's the new dirty word for farmers after a year of record crop production followed by a winter of logistical issues and a feeling of powerlessness.

Storage issues throughout the winter muted the thrill of delivering feed barley off the combine. My heart especially goes out to those of you with grain sitting on the ground. These issues have led to a situation that we

did not anticipate—and that we have not been able to easily resolve.

The lack of a simple fix has led to a lot of rhetoric from all parties involved. We all know the government, the producer groups, the grain companies and the railways are working on the problem, but it is incredibly frustrating to see such a monumental failure within our domestic transportation system.

Our country was built on—and by—railways and farmers. However, farmers remain the last priority of the railways. That is disheartening.

Money talks, and our competition comes from the forestry, oil and gas, mining and potash sectors. The pursuit of any realistic solution has to take into account that those are simply higher-value commodities.

As farmers, we are being told to

gear up to feed a growing global population, while at the same time we know there is no way to efficiently get a record-breaking crop out of the country.

As we move to modernize our varietal registration system to get outputs up for the demands of our world, we cannot help but wonder what to do about transportation. There is no point in growing more food if we are never going to be able to move it.

I sit on the federal government's Crop Logistics Working Group and I feel like I should have the answer—but I'm still searching.

However, I can assure you that Alberta Barley will continue to apply pressure so this issue remains a priority for industry and government. After all, there is a hungry world out there.



# GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE



**Lisa Skierka**  
**General Manager**

## Trading Up

**W**orking on issues in agriculture sometimes feels like learning a second or third language.

Whether it's participating in the Barley Council of Canada (BCC), the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC), the Canada Grains Council (CGC) or the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance

(CAFTA), it seems like there is a C-based acronym for all of our partner organizations.

This can make clear communication that much harder for all of us. For example, it can be tough explaining a point if you're talking about the CGC (Canada Grains Council) and the people you're talking to think you're making a point about the CGC (Canadian Grain Commission). This happens to me more than I'd like to admit.

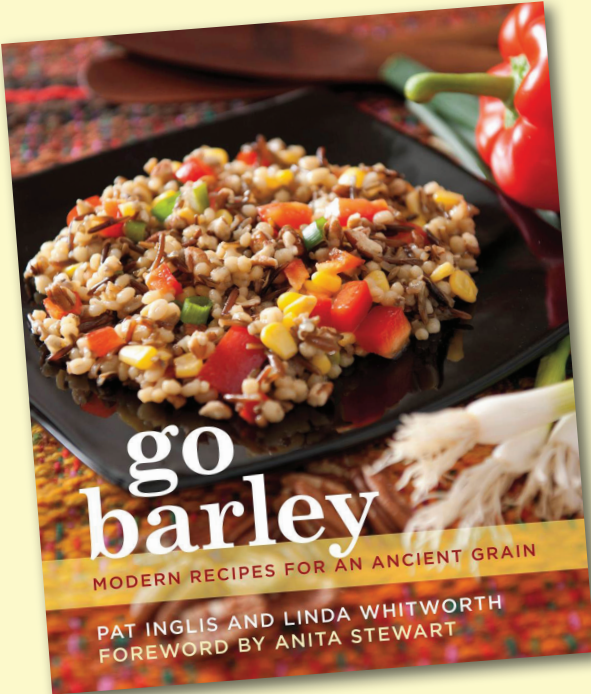
Despite onerous acronyms, Alberta Barley's involvement at the national level increased significantly over the past year. Our chairman Matt Sawyer was elected vice-president of the GGC in December; Region 1 delegate and former chairman Brian Otto remains chair of the BCC; and I have been the president of CAFTA since last May. Recently elected Region 3 director Jason Lenz was also appointed as Alberta Barley's representative

on the BCC in December.

These additional responsibilities are our way of ensuring Alberta's barley farmers have a strong voice. They also complement our work in growing Alberta's barley industry—and ensuring its profitability.

The national groups we work with all have different areas of focus and responsibility, and each of them runs on a small staff that brings in expertise from its member organizations. Our goal is to work with these key groups to ensure barley is fairly represented, but we are also keen to maximize resources and avoid duplication.

In the coming years, I anticipate that we will get better at organizing and sharing resources in order to benefit barley growers in the field.



**A new take on an ancient grain, *Go Barley* is a revolutionary cookbook that includes more than 100 healthy, delicious and easy-to-follow recipes, accompanied by mouthwatering colour photographs.**

**The cookbook will be available for purchase on April 8, 2014. For more information go to [gobarley.com](http://gobarley.com).**



## POLICY UPDATE



Erin  
Gowriluk  
**Policy  
Analyst**

**A**lberta Barley directors and delegates took time during our 2013 annual general meeting to work together on a domestic policy agenda for 2014. With the year already underway, we are sticking to our New Year's resolutions.

Top of the agenda was identifying policy priorities. The resulting list included policy issues of high importance to barley farmers across the province, which will direct Alberta Barley's policy work for the year.

Through the process of issue identification, our elected representatives looked for opportunities to collaborate with industry partners and expressed a strong desire to show leadership in several key areas. Transportation, variety registration and the potential increase in Canadian corn acres were identified as our top three policy issues.

Alberta Barley's directors and delegates demonstrated a strong desire to increase agriculture's social licence through education and consumer-awareness initiatives.

Social licence is used to measure the level of public consent or approval of an organization or industry's practices. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Deputy Minister Jason Krips identified social licence as a priority for the ministry in late 2013, in large part because it is expected

*Alberta Barley is doing important work to collaborate with industry partners in developing producer-driven policy solutions*



Through active engagement and working closely with industry partners, Alberta Barley works on issues ranging from market access to sustainability.

to increasingly influence trade in the years to come.

Alberta Barley's ongoing involvement in educational initiatives like the Classroom Agriculture Program and Aggie Days, as well as consumer-focused promotion through [www.gobarley.com](http://www.gobarley.com) and events like the Calgary Stampede, demonstrate that we are communicating the importance of the agriculture sector to consumers in Alberta.

In November 2013, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Minister Gerry Ritz announced his intention to ratify UPOV 91 by Aug. 1, 2014. This announcement, along with the introduction of the government's

proposed *Agricultural Growth Act*, led to a series of important and ongoing conversations around the government's role in plant breeding, end-point royalties and what will be required to create an environment that encourages innovation through increased investment.

Rounding out Alberta Barley's policy priorities for 2014 are environmental policy and agricultural land fragmentation. As an active member of the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta and the Crop Sector Working Group, we are collaborating with our industry partners to develop producer-driven, made-in-Alberta environmental policy solutions.



## COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE



**Cole Christensen**  
**Communications Manager**

### Food for Thought

Just as farmers have spent the winter preparing for the year ahead, our communications department has spent the winter months laying the groundwork for an exciting and busy spring and summer.

In the coming months, you will be seeing a lot of us. We are always looking to improve, and our department is focused on reaching out to our members (on the road, on the phone and online) to find out how to serve you better.

No matter what we are working on, our philosophy remains strong and continues to drive us: farmers speak on farmer issues. With that in mind, we remain committed to getting our name out there, and providing a strong farmer voice on issues that affect your bottom line.

We will also continue to do what we do best, which is to ensure that Alberta Barley is the “go-to” information source for barley, as well as any issues that impact our industry. In addition to handling media inquiries, writing press releases and setting up interviews, we are committed to providing our members with the most “bang for their buck.” This means delivering the latest information on how Alberta Barley is maximizing farmers’ check-off dollars.

One way we do this is through our *Barley Country* blog on [www.albertabarley.com](http://www.albertabarley.com). With guest bloggers from across the agriculture industry, in-depth profiles on our research and market development projects, and constantly updated video content, we are offering a new and innovative format for farmers to see how Alberta Barley is working for them. Our re-launched website is also home to our latest press releases, events listings and other pertinent information. We are already seeing the fruits of our labour, as [www.albertabarley.com](http://www.albertabarley.com) is now receiving more than 5,000 hits per month.

*In addition to handling media inquiries, writing press releases and setting up interviews, we are committed to providing our members with the most “bang for their buck.”*

Speaking of websites, if you are looking for the latest on Canada’s homegrown superfood, check out [www.GoBarley.com](http://www.GoBarley.com). Our consumer website is a one-stop shop with recipes, how-to videos, Q&As with our market development manager and food spokesperson Linda Whitworth, and reviews of everyone’s favourite beverage (BEER!). You can also get the latest on our new cookbook, *Go Barley: Modern Recipes for an Ancient Grain*.

We continue to provide support for the Western Canadian Deduction, as well as the Barley Council of Canada and Alberta Barley’s research and market development teams. We are also focusing on enhancing our agronomic reach and capabilities. A communicator’s work is never done, and we wouldn’t have it any other way.

## MEET THE STAFF



**Asad Mahmood**  
**Project Accountant**

Asad Mahmood is a project accountant for Alberta Barley. He has been with the organization since November 2012. Currently, he is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Western Canadian Deduction.

Asad grew up in Islamabad, Pakistan, with dreams of becoming a pilot and travelling the world. His interest in becoming a stockbroker led him to the field of finance and strategy. At the age of 23, Asad immigrated to Canada to pursue a master of business administration (MBA) at Laurentian University in Sudbury, ON. After graduation, he worked in the telecommunications industry before moving to Calgary in 2012.

In his free time, Asad enjoys reading the news and trying new foods. He wants to travel the world and visit the Middle East, Europe and Australia. While he is fluent in English, Punjabi and Urdu, Asad is passionate about learning and would like to study Arabic and French.