

Looking ahead to 2010



Photo courtesy Lynne Yelich

The debate over flax acres for 2010-11 has already started. Industry estimates are from a low of 900,000 acres to my high of 1.3 million. Farmers would be wise to track prices from now to mid February when grain companies should start accumulating stocks for the opening of navigation in Thunder Bay. The basis between Europe and Canada must narrow to traditional levels or the risk of 900,000 acres becomes quite high. While this will not be fully understood before the Crop Production Show in Saskatoon, new crop bids for flax may set the tone for bids to come in early February into the export market.

2009 was a trying year, even more if you were a flax farmer. If we learned anything from the past year it is that environmental politics for flax farmers can turn a profitable year into a questionable year very quickly.

We started this report with a quote on optimism. And this year, when farmers gather all the information they require to begin to make seeding decisions for

2010, the pencil will work overtime to determine if flax will again fit in their rotations. I am optimistic that flax trade will return to some sense of normalcy in 2010 and when it does, 2009 will be a forgotten entity remembered for the phenomenal yields and the amazing length of the harvest and not some trade irritant caused by an overzealous group looking to raise additional funds in Europe on the backs of western Canadian farmers.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Penny Eaton for her help and guidance in preparing these reports over the past year. She continually raises the bar with each edition and challenges me to be better. And lastly, to Mrs. Flax herself, Linda Braun, whose tenacity and hard work has helped evolve the flax industry as a whole, thank you.

To all of you in 2010, I wish you all the best for a successful crop year. Remember, you don't need to worry, I've got your back covered in that department. Have a Happy New Year! 🎉

