ANOTHER YEAR COME AND GONE

A look at 2019/20 production and recent progress made

Wayne Thompson, Executive Director

Let's start with the flax production in 2019. Canadian acreage was 928,500, with production estimated to be 486,000 tonnes, down from the 2018/19 crop year because 21% of the flax crop in Saskatchewan is still in the field this winter. According to the Canadian Grain Commission's Harvest Sample Program results, 85% of the flax crop is a Number 1 grade with good oil content, which should mean the industrial market for flaxseed is well served. Buyers for the food market are spending more time looking for flaxseed that meets specifications for food and pet food markets because the longer harvest resulted in flax being out longer than desired.

The Black Sea countries continued to increase their flax production for the 2019/20 crop year, which continues to put pressure on Canadian traders into China. Kazakhstan and Russia have increased their flax exports to China, as the Chinese government has opened up their border to these countries, bolstered by cheaper prices and improved transportation logistics. Canadian flax is still competing however on quality and reputation. United States (U.S.) flax production for 2019/20 was over 162,000 tonnes, up from 113,000 tonnes in 2018/19. This has meant slower sales to the US.

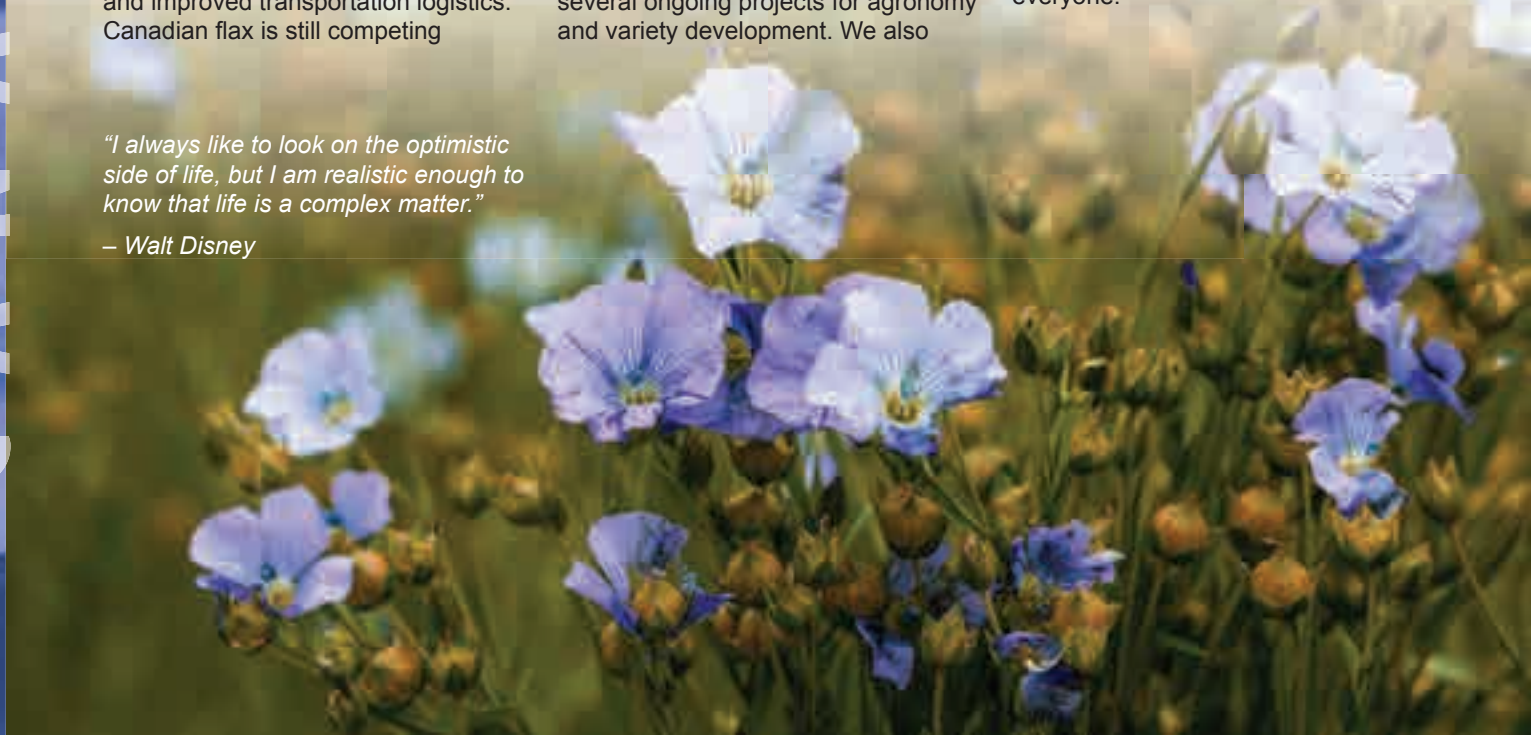
With less production and slower flaxseed sales, SaskFlax's 2019/20 research investments decreased from previous years. However, we were still able to find some high quality and promising projects. For example, we co-funded a project with the Agriculture Development Fund (ADF), led by Dr. Steve Shirtliffe at the University of Saskatchewan that aims to eliminate the source of herbicide-resistant kochia and another one, led by Dr. Fran Walley, which will revise crop nutrient uptake and removal guidelines for Western Canadian crops including flax. This second project is co-funded with the Western Grains Research Foundation, SaskCanola, the Prairie Oat Producers Association, Sask Wheat and the Alberta Wheat Commission. In addition to these newly funded projects, SaskFlax continues to fund several ongoing projects for agronomy and variety development. We also have an open call for research about straw management on the farm, as this remains the Number One concern of flax producers.

On the market development front, we are still exploring where flax protein is a fit within the plant protein industry, through research and initiatives like Protein Industries Canada. SaskFlax continues to make presentations to domestic and international groups to promote our flax and its uses. The Chinese market remains the largest buyer of Canadian flax and that relationship is important. SaskFlax will also continue to work on growing demand in the food and feed market in North America because of its proximity and untapped potential.

This spring, many producers will still have to combine some crop before seeding starts. The stress of taking the 2019 crop off before seeding the 2020 crop will be tough to manage but we are hopeful that everything will go well and that by this fall we will be looking at a good yielding, high quality crop for everyone.

"I always like to look on the optimistic side of life, but I am realistic enough to know that life is a complex matter."

– Walt Disney



SaskFlax

Want to receive the latest news from SaskFlax about agronomy, marketing, upcoming events and more?

Sign up for our email list at saskflax.com
(at the bottom of our homepage)

2020 FIELD DAY LISTINGS

July 8 – Western Applied Research Corp, Scott
WARC Field Day

July 9 -- Canada-Saskatchewan and Irrigation Crop Diversification, Outlook
CSICD Field Day

July 15 -- Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation, Melfort
NARF and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada joint field day

July 15 -- South East Research Farm, Redvers
SERF intercropping field day

July 16 -- Wheatland Conservation Area Research Farm, Swift Current
WCA field day

July 16 -- East Central Research Farm, Yorkton
ECRF Field Day

July 21 -- Indian Head Research Farm, Indian Head
Crop management field day

July 28 -- Conservation Learning Centre, Prince Albert
CLC Field Day

SR&ED CREDIT FOR FLAX

Each year, Saskatchewan flax producers contribute check-off dollars to research and development and over the past year have again earned an eligible tax credit on their investment.

The Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) is a federal tax incentive program to encourage Canadians to conduct research and development in Canada that will lead to new, improved, or technologically advanced products or processes.

- For the crop year ending July 31, 2019 the federal SR&ED tax credit for levy-paying flax producers is 63.4%.
- For the crop year ending July 31, 2019 the Saskatchewan Provincial SR&ED tax credit for levy-paying flax producers is 62%

As producers know, our research projects use producers' check-off dollars to lever additional monies from industry sponsors and other funding agencies.

This tax credit may be used to offset federal tax carried back up to three years or, if no taxes are owing, may be refunded.

For more information on this tax credit, consult your accountant or go to the Canada Revenue Agency website at: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/sred/

SaskFlax

JOIN US FOR

FLAX DAY 2020

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18
8:30AM TO 4:00PM
AGT LOUNGE AT MOSAIC STADIUM, REGINA

Learn about flax pesticides, market outlook, flax uses,the 2019 disease situation, flax breeding and more.

More information at: www.saskflax.com
Register by phone: 306-664-1901 or e-mail: saskflax@saskflax.com
Registration fee $20 at the door

FLAX DAY 2020 SCHEDLUE

8:30am	Registration
8:50am	Welcome
9:00am	Pesticide Panel featuring BASF, FMC and the U of S
10:00am	BREAK
10:30am	Bart Lardner (U of S) -- Cattle and Flax
11:15am	Sandy Junek (Discovery Seed Labs) – The 2019 Disease Situation
12:00pm	LUNCH
12:45pm	Todd Hyra (Secan) - Trailing Seed Royalty
1:30pm	Cory Jacob (Ministry of Agriculture) – Flax Update and 2019 Review
2:00pm	Jon Driedger (Leftfield Commodities) – Flax Market Outlook
3:00pm	BREAK
3:30pm	Helen Booker (U of S) – Breeding Flax for the Canadian Prairies
4:00pm	Wrap-up

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL

The basics are important when it comes to growing flax

As we head into another growing season, it's important to be mindful of the basic rules for growing a successful flax crop.

Proper techniques and practices when it comes to seeding, crop management, and harvest practices can go a long way.

Here's a brief reminder for growers.

SEEDING

- Always use high quality seed. Treat seed if it is diseased or of poorer quality.
- Account for germination rate, thousand seed weight, emergence rate and desired plant population when determining seeding rate.
- Target a population between 300 to 400 plants/m2 (30 to 40/ft2) to maximize yield.
- Know the residual herbicide history of the field. Flax is susceptible to herbicide carryover injury from several herbicides in the season following application, or even a few seasons afterwards, depending on environmental conditions and soil characteristics.
- Fertilize sufficiently. Mid-row or side band N and P to avoid damage to seedlings.
- Seed flax after a mycorrhizal crop.
- Seed flax within the first 3 weeks of May to maximize yield potential. Flax is relatively frost tolerant (-3.9oC at the cotyledon stage, -8oC at the 2-leaf stage), so it can be seeded early.
- Provide a firm seed bed to ensure good seed-to-soil contact.
- Provide effective early season weed control, especially when seedlings are 2 to 6" high.
- Expect a 1 to 2% yield decrease with every inch of row spacing increase above 6".

DISEASE, WEED AND PEST MANAGEMENT

- Scout for cutworms, grasshoppers, flax bollworm, beet webworm, potato aphids, pasmo and Sclerotinia and apply a chemical to control if necessary.
- Be aware of the pre-harvest intervals of late-season chemicals applied to flax.
- Learn how to properly rate the maturity stage of a flax crop.
- Apply a pre-harvest treatment at 30% or less seed moisture content. This typically corresponds to when 75% of the bolls are brown and boll segments have begun to separate.

FLAX CROP

HARVEST AND STORAGE

- Combine when 90 to 100% of the bolls are brown (seed will rattle loudly in the bolls and the moisture content will be 10% or less).
- Adjust combine settings before harvesting flax and throughout the day as environmental conditions change.
- Ensure straw chopper knives and cutter/sickle bar and knives are sharp and in good working order prior to harvest. Use a new set of knives if possible.
- Store flax seed long term at a moisture content of 8.5% or less.
- Monitor flax seed in storage frequently to avoid heating and spoilage issues.

The crop on the right is at the correct stage for applying a pre-harvest chemical, while the one on the left is not mature enough.

60% brown bolls, 40% yellow bolls, 5% green bolls

75% brown bolls, 20% yellow bolls, 5% green bolls

For more detailed information on the tips listed above check out the Growing Flax guide https://www.saskflax.com/quadrant/media/Pdfs/Growing%20Flax/150101_FCOC-growers-guide-v11.pdf.

For detailed agronomic information on flax throughout the growing season and during harvest, sign up for the Flax on the Farm newsletter on the SaskFlax website (www.saskflax.com).

MAINTAINING HIGH QUALITY FLAX

SaskFlax-funded research aims to develop safe storage guidelines for Canadian flax

When it comes to growing flax, it's important to understand some things about the moisture levels of your crop.

For example, knowing the equilibrium moisture content (EMC) of your seed, or the point at which the seed is no longer gaining or losing moisture, will help you determine best practices around post-harvest operations such as drying, aeration, or storage.

But unfortunately, the information we currently have available on EMC for flax is based on research done in the 90s, and varieties and practices have changed a lot since then. There is also little information available on storage characteristics of flax grown in the Canadian Prairies.

This is why university of Manitoba professors Dr. Jitendra Paliwal and Dr. Chyngyz Erkinbaev recently launched a project, partially funded by SaskFlax, that will aim to develop general guidelines for safe storage of Canadian flax, based on EMC information.

"Such work will provide a valuable framework to tackle bigger issues that constrain production and marketing of flax," says Dr. Erkinbaev.

The project aims to determine the EMC characteristics and safe storage guidelines for flaxseeds grown in Canada. From the information generated, researchers will develop mathematical models for equilibrium moisture content and smart look-up-tables based on data analytics for predicting the final moisture content of flaxseeds when exposed to air at a certain temperature and relative humidity.

Moreover, flaxseed will be studied under several cycle conditions (for example, micro-wetted and dried, freezing and thawing) in order to develop a multivariate relationship between storage conditions and flaxseed quality, in order to develop accurate safe storage guidelines for farmers, Dr. Erkinbaev says.

"Having a knowledge base of the sorption isotherms of flaxseeds coupled with wet chemistry analysis will help us identify the optimal conditions for storage, transportation and quality preservation," he says.

"These updated look-up tables will provide farmers an effective tool for optimal storage of flaxseeds."

This research is a sound investment for SaskFlax, as it ties in with its goals to increase the quality and volume of flax produced in Canada, with a priority emphasis on agronomy, processing, human health and flax for livestock and pet diets, says Dr. Erkinbaev.

But he adds that the major benefactors will be farmers, exporters and seed processors.

Dr. Chyngyz Erkinbaev

"Enhanced efficiencies in flaxseed storage, handling, processing, and marketing will directly benefit producers," he says.

"Cost-effective methods of storing and handling flaxseeds will help in maintaining the quality of flaxseeds and help to prevent financial losses to individual farmers."

"Enhanced efficiencies in flaxseed storage, handling, processing, and marketing will directly benefit producers." -Dr. Erkinbaev


“This research is a sound investment for SaskFlax, as it ties in with its goals to increase the quality and volume of flax produced in Canada...”

SaskFlax

SaskFlax was established in 1996 and represents registered flax producers in Saskatchewan. Directed by flax producers, SaskFlax operates via a mandatory but refundable producer levy on flaxseed and straw. These dollars are leveraged whenever possible to execute programs ultimately geared to increase net returns to its producers members and advance Saskatchewan's flax industry.

SASKATCHEWAN FLAX DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

8-3815 Thatcher Avenue
Saskatoon, SK S7R 1A3

Phone: 1.306.664.1901

Email: saskflax@saskflax.com

Web: www.saskflax.com

Twitter: @SaskFlax

CANADIAN FLAX

HEALTHY FLAX

Web: HealthyFlax.org

Twitter: @HealthyFlax

Facebook: www.facebook.com/healthyflax

Instagram: HealthyFlax.org

FLAX COUNCIL OF CANADA

400 -167 Lombard Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB R3B 0T6

Phone: 1-204-982-2115

Email: flax@flaxcouncil.ca

Web: www.flaxcouncil.ca

MANITOBA FLAX GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Box 1760
38 - 4th Ave NE
Carman MB R0G 0J0

Phone: 1-204-982-3990

Email: mfga@mymts.net

Web: www.mfga.ca

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