



Saskatchewan Flax Grower

**April
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*A Saskatchewan flax
industry newsletter
published by the
Saskatchewan
Flax Development
Commission*



SaskFlax



Allen Kuhlmann
Chair,
Saskatchewan
Flax Development
Commission

Our Mission
"To lead, promote,
and enhance the
production,
value-added
processing and
utilization of
Saskatchewan flax."

Chair's Report

I would first like to bring greetings to all from Dog River.

On a beautiful spring-like day, one can fairly easily see the reasons, that at least some of us, just love the newness this time of year brings to both our land and this year even our attitudes.

This past year in agriculture really accents what a roller coaster ride producers are on! Last year, optimism was hard to find. Commodity prices were mostly in the tank. Isn't hindsight great? Few crops were projected to be profitable. Now the prices of both our inputs and our outputs seem to reaching for the sky. There have been some bumps along that road but now experts are suggesting a scenario where energy value will determine the value of agricultural crops. Surely utopia is just around the corner!

Those of us who have been around a while may have heard optimistic projections in the past. Does anyone remember, "They aren't making any more land and soon we won't be able to feed ourselves?" I hope this time the optimists are right and that land, machinery and input prices leave something for the bottom line! We all need a chance to recover from past setbacks and perhaps some might even think of the "R word".

The article I wrote in June 2006 referred briefly to the issue of genetic modification of flax. There has been much talk and even some action on this front in the last few months.

The policy of your organization is:
The Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission will support commercialization of a transgenic flax variety in Canada when:

Up Coming Events

September 14 – 16, 2007
Saskatchewan Fibre *inDemand, Naturally!* to be held at Saskatoon Prairieland Park.

January 7, 2008
SaskFlax Annual General Meeting and Flax Day 2008 to be held in conjunction with Crop Production Week, Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

- The variety meets Canada's current regulatory approvals for food, feed and environmental safety.
- Regulatory approval for the transgenic event is obtained in the following export markets; the United States, the European Union, Japan, and Mexico.
- An identity preservation system is in place and a rapid, cost effective test for identification of the specific GMO trait is available.
- Saskatchewan flax producers must realize positive benefits and financial returns from the production of the variety.

We need everyone involved in the industry to revisit their thoughts and intentions regarding GM and somehow find a path through the minefield so producers have a market for their flax at the end of the day. It needs to be at least as good as the current, one but if we are going to take risks it needs to be even better. The industry will go forward on this front and I sincerely hope it takes us to a better place and not leave producers as wreckage along the way!

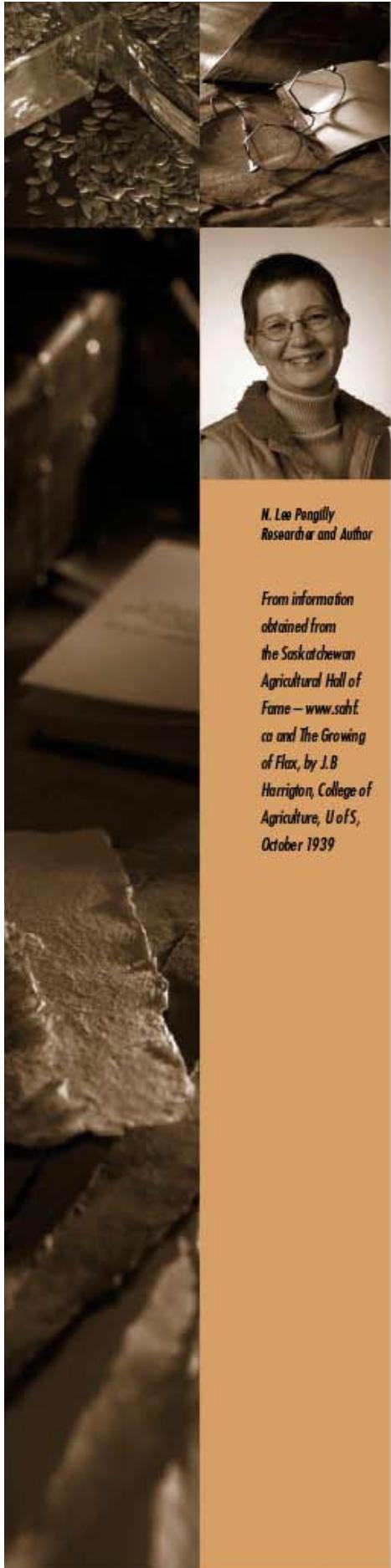
I leave the above thoughts for everyone to mull over and hopefully even respond to.

Meanwhile may the "rain gods" treat you as well as you would like to be treated and remember \$8.00 flax isn't the end of the world.

Allen Kuhlmann
Chair

July 21 – 24, 2008
United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Bast Conference to be hosted by SaskFlax in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This is the first time this conference will be hosted in North America.

2009
International Year of Natural Fibers as proclaimed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.



From the Archives:

SaskFlax Grower – 10 Years Ago - 1997

With election results for the newly formed Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission tallied, readers were informed and introduced to the new Board of Directors: Chris Hale of Rouleau (Chairman), Terry Boehm of Allan, Allen Kuhlmann, of Vanguard, Bill Farley of Regina and Ron Gilmour of Craik. Ray McVicar with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food and Gordon Rowland with the Crop Development Centre both served as Advisors. Linda Braun was hired as the Executive Director and began implementation of the first strategic plan. Levy dollars were to be directed towards market facilitation, research (both varietal and agronomic) and communication. The office of SaskFlax was relocated to its present Saskatoon location and the first research applications were under evaluation. These included two on varietal development and one partnered with Flax Council of Canada on the evaluation of flaxseed samples. Guy Lafond at the Indian Head Research Station was awarded the work on the latter project. Plans were underway for the first annual meeting to be held in conjunction with Flax Growers of Western Canada during Crop Production Week. In 1997 flax and solin (Linola) production on the prairies was in the order of 2.25 million acres with the price in the \$8.00 per bushel range.

Flax in Canada – 90 years ago – 1917

(An Excerpt From the "Proceedings of Convention" of Canadian Flax Growers held at London, Ontario February 28 and March 1, 1917)

Agenda:

1. Chairman's Address
2. Early History of Flax in Canada
3. Cause of Decline and Future of Flax Industry in Canada
4. The Natural Resources Survey and its Relation to the Flax Industry
5. The Possibility of Profitably Combining Hemp with Flax Growing
6. Flax Growing from a Farmer's Standpoint
7. Annual Meeting of Canadian Flax Growers' Association
8. The Merits of Water Retting as Compared to Dew Retting
9. The Preparation and Grading of Flax Fiber for the Spinning Mill
10. Scutching Machine
11. The Possibilities of the Manufacture of Commercial Commodities from Green Unretted Flax Straw

More from the Archives: Some Interesting "Seven" Milestones 1887 – 120 years ago

Indian Head Experimental Farm was established with Angus Mackay as director. His experiments with summer fallow established a farm practice that continues to be implemented on some operations to this day.

1897 – 110 years ago

The federal government signed the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement with the CPR under which the railway would receive \$3,000,000.00 to build a branch line running from Lethbridge to the mining resources in southern B.C. In return settlers would benefit from low freight rates for shipping in the supplies they needed and conversely, shipping out the grain they grew.

1907 – 100 years ago

Local Improvement Districts Association was formed. The organization came to be known as the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM).

1917 – 90 years ago

The federal government, as a wartime emergency measure, set up a Board of Grain Supervisors Wheat Board with monopoly over wheat sales. The futures market was shut down. With European agriculture disrupted by war, wheat prices rose to \$2.21 a bushel.

The Saskatchewan government brought in the Saskatchewan Farm Loans Act to provide credit for agricultural operation and expansion.

Grain Growers Company amalgamated with Alberta Cooperative Elevator Company to form United Grain Growers Ltd.

1937 – 70 years ago

Crop failure resulted when drought, heat, rust and grasshoppers decimated crops. (Wheat yield averaged 2.7 bushels per acre and low records were set for flax at 1.3 bushels per acre.)

1987 – 20 years ago

Canada Agriculture Minister Bill McKnight and Saskatchewan Premier Grant Devine announced a billion dollars would be paid to grain farmers who had suffered from low export prices caused by the trade war between the United States and the European Community. Payments were cost shared with the provincial governments and continued until safety net programs could be instituted.



Chris Hale

Bill Farley

Allen Kuhlmann

SaskFlax: A Look at Our History – A Look to Our Future

N. Lee Pengilly

In recognition of the 10th Anniversary of the Commission, I thought it would be interesting to speak with representatives from the first Board of Directors. I asked each of those interviewed what he viewed as the significant accomplishments and/or struggles of the past 10 years. We concluded the interviews with some thoughts on the future.

Chris Hale was the first Chair of SaskFlax. My conversation with him began with a brief history lesson on how SaskFlax came to be. He cites a major catalyst for its inception was flax producers seeing the successes both Saskatchewan's canola and pulse producers were experiencing due to a stable source of funding (levy dollars).

"This provided the enthusiasm amongst a core group of us to get things going. After following the appropriate procedures we had things in place and we were fortunate in our first year to have good flax sales. It naturally took some time to get our feet underneath us. Initially our research interest was primarily agronomic and varietal, but we could see flax moving from an industrial commodity to a food/nutraceutical product. Levy dollars provided seed money to bring this research along."

"We recognized early on that straw management is a major issue and something positive has to happen with it. This has been and continues to be a challenge. We have been making progress (with the help of Biolin Research).

"From the beginning we have been lucky to have attracted good members to the Board who have always worked to producers' best interests. We have worked extensively with government at all levels and have made many contacts. With the levy generated dollars we have been able to undertake significant projects."

"I think our successes speak highly of the members of the Board who have Chaired both the organization and the sub-committees. SaskFlax has built a reputation as a 'Go – To' group in Saskatchewan, Canada and Internationally. It's important to maintain those good relationships. We emphasize a strong team effort and we work hard to present a united front. This has allowed us to move things along."

"The future of SaskFlax is bright and strong and will remain so as long as we respond to the needs and concerns of our producer membership. Continued communication through our annual general meeting, field days, newsletters and one-on-one opportunities allow this to happen. As an industry, we need to keep tabs on both the industrial markets as well as those pertaining to human health. We need to keep flax competitive in the competition for acres and market access."

Next on my list of contacts was Bill Farley who farms in the Regina area. In terms of successes, Bill's response was immediate, "Through the formation of SaskFlax and the ability to collect levy dollars, we have been able to get great value and mileage out of our research dollars. Whenever you invest in research, you get value several times over what you spend. We just wouldn't have an industry without it. Even if all projects are not successful in the short term, the money is still well spent, never knowing where or what it might lead to. An excellent example of that is what we have seen in the food/nutraceutical industry. In the early days of the Commission, most flax use had been industrial, but now we are seeing as much as 20% of the flax crop going into food and nutraceuticals. This helps to stabilize the price of flax."

"Another area where research is really paying off is in the area of fiber. This process is ongoing and Alvin [Ulrich] is doing very good work. Finding more uses for the straw will discourage burning. Research initiatives in this area will pay off and soon, straw will be an asset. As society moves to more utilization of natural fibers flax growers will help save the environment. But this will take a long time."

"In our desire to look at food and fiber we have to recognize that 75% to 80% of our flaxseed continues to go into the industrial market. We need to keep tabs on where that market is going."

"I give credit to the Flax Commission. Levy dollars have been well used to enhance research by providing core money. These have been the seed dollars with which we can leverage further research funds from the public and private sector. From the beginning, SaskFlax has had good people on the Board. People do it because they know it's good for the farming public. The check-off dollars give great value."

Allen Kuhlman is serving his second year as Chair of SaskFlax. He began with a sigh, "It just doesn't

seem like 10 years, yet in other ways it seems like things don't happen fast enough. When we started, flax wasn't even considered a food. Brown flax was primarily an industrial feedstock. It was in the early dawning of its potential as a food and nutraceutical. What we see today hadn't even been contemplated. Working with what flax could and should be used for has been a focus for SaskFlax activities since those beginnings. The challenge remains as to how to get the average person to consume that magic two tablespoons per day! But the inroads made and the research completed in terms of health and wellness is a major accomplishment of the organization."

"As far as struggles, it would have to be with finances as being a limiting factor in both what we would like to do and what we'd like to get done. It seems like government has chosen to back out of lots of the research funding for agriculture, leaving more and more up to producers. Organizations are being forced to use levy dollars for things government used to cover."

"This direction of government concerns me. As producers, we have seen flax evolve from a wholly industrial commodity to a player in the food/nutraceutical market and yet government suggests we don't need further agronomic or varietal research. Without a healthy producer base you can't have a successful value chain. It's a simple as that and government is missing the point. It's great to see all this potential, but some of that wealth has got to make it into the hands of producers. That is both a challenge and a frustration."

"One of the major obstacles to substantially increasing flax acreage relates to the fiber residue issue. We have to find other uses for it and that just doesn't happen quickly. If we look at the cotton story, it has taken 300 years to get where they are."

"Things take time. As an organization and an industry, we need to move forward both thoughtfully and sustainably."



U of S Flax Lignan Supplement Gets USDA Approval

A flax based compound developed at the U of S and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has received FDA approval for use as a health boosting dietary supplement. The compound, called lignan promises to help lower cholesterol and blood pressure, prevent diabetes and reduce hardening of the arteries.

The product has been called Beneflax and is under exclusive license to Archer Daniel Midland. By regulation, new dietary ingredients must be notified to FDA 75 days prior to marketing. If the agency does not raise any objections to the new dietary ingredient within this 75-day period, the ingredient can be marketed in supplements.

For more information www.nutraingredients-usa.com

The Value Just Keeps Adding (Part 2)

In the second part of this ongoing section, we will take a look at some flax fiber related industries; companies or individuals who are making use of flax fiber in either large or small quantities. The information included in this section is based on the company's website or on personal interviews. Once again, we'd be happy to receive any leads on who to include in future articles. We'd be very interested in names of Saskatchewan folk who use flax within any art or craft. Send your ideas to saskflax@saskflax.com.

BioFibre Industries

Located in Canora, Saskatchewan, BioFibre Industries processes unretted flax straw from oilseed flax. The flax fiber is extracted and then further processed making it useful for many industrial and biocomposite applications.

Much of Saskatchewan's flax straw is burned after harvest in order to get rid of it. By taking this flax straw, processing it and using the fiber BioFibre Industries can help the farmer to value add to his straw. They are endeavoring to expand the applications of flax fiber with the plastics and biocomposites industries.

Flax fiber is a bast fiber with a high tensile strength. It contains approximately 20% fiber and 80% shive. When flax fiber is used as a replacement for wood filler and as an additive with composites, the end product is lighter, stronger, minimizes expansion /contraction and is environmentally friendly.

For more information
www.biofibreindustries.com

Schweitzer-Mauduit International, Inc.

Schweitzer-Mauduit is a diversified producer of premium specialty papers and the world's largest supplier of fine papers to the tobacco industry. Schweitzer-Mauduit conducts business in over 90 countries and employs approximately 3600 people world-wide, with operations in the United States, France, Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines and Canada and with one joint venture under construction in China.

The Canadian fiber processing operations are based in Winkler, Manitoba. Flax straw is purchased across a broad area including the Canadian provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan and North Dakota in the United States. The straw is baled into round bales and trucked to three different processing locations in Southern Manitoba. The permanent Processing Facility is a permanent plant located in Carmen, Manitoba, and also serves as one of the three straw storage sites. The other storage and processing sites are located in Souris and Treherne, Manitoba, where a portable decorticating processor moves to these locations. The processed fiber is supplied to the Schweitzer-Mauduit mill located in Spotwood, New Jersey and is used to produce flax pulp for the manufacture of cigarette papers.

For more information
www.schweitzer-mauduit.com

Craik Flax House

Larry Turgeon's passion is helping people. For the past few years he has not only researched the construction of straw buildings, but has built two homes and is working on a third. Larry has dedicated the rest of his life to helping people own their own home. "At one time a person of modest means could own a home in his or her lifetime. Today that goal is out of reach for many people. I, among others, am trying to spread the word about straw bale buildings... or rather, straw bale structures (SBS)."

"After reading books, talking to resourceful people, helping others build SBS's in the United States, I discovered there are many ways to create the building one wants. I want to share that information with you."

Located in Craik, the Craik Flax House will also be a teaching facility in regards to the construction of SBS's as well as marketing alternative power sources such as wind generators along with solar panels and battery banks.

For more information
www.flaxbales.com

Farmer Tax Credits		
Commodity	Percentage	Organization
Flax	7.9%	Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission
Pulse	59%	Saskatchewan Pulse Crop Development Board
Canola	13.5%	Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission
Mustard	26.9%	Saskatchewan Mustard Development Commission
Wheat	83%	Western Grains Research Foundation
Barley	83%	Western Grains Research Foundation

Saskatchewan Fibre *indemand*, Naturally!

Several Saskatchewan groups are joining together to tell the world about natural fibers! As part of the Saskatchewan *indemand*, 2007 event, September 14-16 at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Fibre *indemand*, Naturally! will showcase fiber from a number of Saskatchewan sources including sheep, alpaca, llama and flax. Fiber will be showcased from the field to end product. Saskatchewan artisans will demonstrate the ways to use each fiber and a number of displays will be available to give a hands-on experience.

Biolin Research Inc., Crop Fibers Canada, Agriculture and Bioresource Engineering (SAF chair) from the U of S, and the Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission will have a number of booths telling the story of flax fiber from the grower's field to the processor to the end product.

Information will be available about fiber workshops and courses, fiber producers and fiber processors.

For more information: Saskatchewan *indemand* www.saskatoonex.com/indemand/indemand_index.html

UN Declares 2009 as International Year of Natural Fibers

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2009 as the International Year of Natural Fiber. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN resolution would help millions of people around the world, among them some of the poorest people in some of the poorest countries, who depend on the production and processing of natural fibers for their livelihood. Natural fibers contribute to food security and economic development for these farmers.

The International Year of Natural Fibers is expected to raise consumers' awareness of natural fibers and strengthen the demand for natural fiber products, improving the livelihoods of the farmers who produce them. At the same time, promoting the use of natural fibers will enhance the environment. The wide range of natural fibers includes cotton, wool, jute, flax, silk, sisal, coconut fiber and many others. Some are produced from plants, others from animals and they are used in clothing and other consumer goods as well as industrial applications.

(Source – www.ebc.org.ph/news/read.php?id=74)

Farmer Tax Credits

Saskatchewan flax producers who in 2006 invested dollars for scientific research and development through the check-off, have once again earned an eligible tax credit.

This is the sixth year the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credit has been available to producers. For the 2006 tax year the eligibility

for the flax tax credit is 7.9%.

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

For more information on this tax credit, consult your accountant or go to the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency website at www.cra.gc.ca/taxcredits/sred/publications/checkoff-e.html.

The following companies are registered to collect the Flax Checkoff and have agreed to have their company names listed in the newsletter.

Agricore United Box 6600 Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3A7 204.944.5411/204.954.1177 F	Diefenbaker Seed Processors Ltd. Box 69 Elbow, Saskatchewan S0H 1J0 306.644.4704/306.644.4706 F	North East Terminal Box 177 Wadena, Saskatchewan S0A 4J0 306.338.2999/306.338.2484 F	Pulse Depot Box 790 Rosetown, Saskatchewan S0L 2V0 306.882.4440/306.882.4434 F
Bioriginal Food & Science Corporation 102 Melville Street Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7J 0R1 306.975.1166/306.242.3829 F	Farmer Direct Cooperative Ltd. 1450 Park Street Regina, Saskatchewan S4N 2G2 306.352.2444/306.352.2443 F	North West Terminal Ltd. Box 1090 Unity, Saskatchewan S0K 4L0 306.228.3735/306.228.3877 F	Raygen Commodities 13815 Thatcherville Avenue Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7R 1A3 306.249.9617
Bunge Canada Box 750 Altona, Manitoba R0G 0B0 204.324.2209/204.324.5995 F	Film-More Seeds Inc. P.O. Box 70 Fillmore, Saskatchewan S0G 1N0 306.722.3353/306.722.3328 F	Parent Seed Farms Ltd. Box 36 St. Joseph, Manitoba R0G 2C0 204.737.2625/204.737.2248 F	Regina Seed Box 28046 Richardson, Saskatchewan S0G 4G0 306.586.8955/306.586.4171 F
Bunge Canada Box 2230 Humboldt, Saskatchewan S0K 2A0 306.682.5060/306.682.5789 F	Horizon Agro Inc. Box 59 R.R. #1 Morris, Manitoba R0G 1K0 204.746.2026/204.746.2343 F	Parkland Pulse Box 848 North Battleford, Saskatchewan S9A 2Z3 306.445.4199/306.445.1650 F	Roy Legumex Inc. 250 Caron Street Box 40 St. Jean-Baptiste, Manitoba R0G 2B0 204.758.3597/204.758.3260 F
Bunge Canada Box 546 Russell, Manitoba R0J 1W0 204.773.3422/204.773.3077 F	Johnston's Box 160 Welwyn, Saskatchewan S0A 4L0 1.800.324.7778	Parrish & Heimbecker Ltd. 1400 – 201 Portage Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 3K6 204.956.2030/204.943.8233 F	Saskatchewan Wheat Pool 2625 Victoria Avenue Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 7J9 306.569.4200/306.569.5133 F
C.B. Constantini 4 – 3002 Louise Street Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7J 3B8 306.373.9730/306.373.7907 F	Keystone Grain Ltd. P.O. Box 1236 Winkler, Manitoba R6W 4B3 204.325.9555/204.325.2240 F	Paterson Grain 22nd Floor – 333 Main Street Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4E2 204.956.2090/204.926.9586 F	Seed Ex Inc. P.O. Box 238 Letellier, Manitoba R0G 1C0 204.737.2000/204.737.2102 F
C.B. Constantini Ltd. 730 – 1508 W. Broadway Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1W8 604.669.1212/604.689.4145 F	Lakeside Global Grains Inc. 665 – 167 Lombard Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0V3 204.255.5550/204.255.5054 F	Pioneer Grain Company Limited 2800 One Lombard Place Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0X8 204.934.5961/204.957.5614 F	Van Buck Seeds Ltd. Box 7 Star City, Saskatchewan S0E 1P0 306.863.4377/306.863.2252 F
Canary Island Seed Associates Inc. Box 70 Sedley, Saskatchewan S0G 4K0 306.885.4444/306.885.2035 F	Larsen Seeds Box 39 Aylsham, Saskatchewan S0E 0C0 306.862.7333/306.862.9552 F	Prairie Flax Products Inc. Box 1057 Portage la Prairie, Manitoba R1N 3C5 204.252.2940/204.252.2983 F	Walker Seeds Ltd. Box 2890 Tisdale, Saskatchewan S0E 1T0 306.873.3777/306.873.5997 F
CenMar Grain Products Ltd. 1480 Sandra Schmirler Way Regina, Saskatchewan S4W 1B7 306.721.1375/306.721.1378 F	Linear Grain Inc. P.O. Box 219 Carman, Manitoba R0E 0J0 204.745.6747/204.745.6573 F	Precision Ag Box 172 Carlyle, Saskatchewan S0C 0R0 306.453.2255	Western Commodities Trading Box 69 Spalding, Saskatchewan S0K 4C0 306.872.2280/306.872.2283 F
Cargill Limited P.O. Box 5900 300 – 240 Graham Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4C5 204.947.6369/204.947.6495 F	Maviga N.A. Inc. 209 – 845 Broad Street Regina, Saskatchewan S4R 8E9 306.721.8900/306.721.8988 F	Precision Ag – Carnduff Box 909 Carnduff, Saskatchewan S0C 0S0 306.482.4343	Western Grain Trade Ltd. #9 – 2155 Airport Drive Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7L 6M5 306.657.3455/306.652.3450 F
Delmar Commodities Ltd. Box 1055 Winkler, Manitoba R0W 4B1 204.331.3696/204.331.3704 F	MJW Farms Ltd. Box 24 Arcola, Saskatchewan S0C 0G0 306.455.2509	Precision Ag – Griffin Griffin, Saskatchewan S0C 1G0 306.457.2220	Weyburn Inland Terminal Box 698 Weyburn, Saskatchewan S4H 2K8 306.842.7436/306.842.0303



Annual General Meeting:

The Annual general Meeting of the Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission was held in conjunction with Crop Production Week on Monday, January 8th, 2007 at the Saskatoon Inn.

Allen Kuhlmann, acting in his capacity as Chair of SaskFlax called the meeting to order. Proceeding adoption of the agenda, minutes of the 2006 AGM were read and approved. The Chairman and Committee Chairs reported on the year to date actions carried out by SFDC. The budget was approved as presented. The following four resolutions were discussed and carried:

Resolution #1 Director Renumeration

Whereas the Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission is established as a development commission pursuant to section 5 of the Agri-Food Act:

Whereas the Commission consists of a Board of Directors consisting of six registered producers elected in accordance with sections 18 to 20 of the Act.

Whereas the remuneration to be paid to the members of the Commission is to be fixed by the registered producers at the annual meeting, and Whereas remuneration for previous fiscal years was \$235.00 (Chair) and \$155.00 (Directors).

Be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission rates of remuneration for its Directors is established at current rates of \$235.00 (Chair) and \$155.00 (Directors) for the fiscal year 2007/2008.

Resolution #2 Own Use Program

Whereas, the Own Use Program was established in 1993 with the express purpose of providing farmers "access to competitively-priced pesticides."

And whereas once the program was made useful, the first product piloted under OUI proved to dramatically increase competition and reduce prices. And whereas the coming era of generic crop protection products holds great promise for the OUI program to further increase price competition on inputs.

And whereas the existing OUI program recognizes that farmers must compete globally and not just with American farmers.

And whereas PMRA has created a great deal of uncertainty among farmers whether or not they will be allowed to access the OUI program for next season.

Therefore it be resolved,

1. That the federal government should retain the existing Own Use Import Program.

2. That if the government wishes to introduce a new program that the new program include opportunities that exist with the current OUI program.

Resolution #3 Voluntary Point of Sale Check-Off Royalties

Whereas Voluntary Point of Sale Check-Off has been used for Research and Development work of various commodities and

Whereas Royalties for Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR) varieties have been collected at time of sale for varieties with PBR.

Therefore be it resolved that point of sale voluntary check-off continues to be used only for Research & Development and administration of the producer-run check-off.

And, be it further resolved that collection of royalties be excluded from point of sale check-offs.

Resolution #4 Public Breeding

Whereas, flax is experiencing significant interest for human, livestock, fiber and industrial oil uses and whereas flax faces strong competition for acres from other oilseeds as well as a range of agricultural crops.

Whereas, limited private commercial interest exists in developing new flax varieties and Saskatchewan flax producers want continued development of improved flax varieties.

Whereas, studies have shown that more income is returned to the farmer from public research versus private research.

Whereas, public funding for this activity seems to be waning and whereas, plant breeding is the foundation of the emerging bio-economy.

Be it resolved, that the Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission strongly encourages Saskatchewan Agriculture & Food and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada to continue to fund and to increase funding of flax variety development.

Immediately following the AGM, attendees heard updates on the activities and plans of Flax Canada 2015 (Kelley Fitzpatrick), Flax Council of Canada (Eric Friddinson) and AmeriFlax (Kaye Effertz).

The balance of the day focused on the theme, "Growing for the Market."

The Breeding Program - Panel

(Scott Duguid - AAFC, Gordon Rowland - CDC,
Paul Dribbenki - AgricoreUnited)

Flax Genomics- Impact on You as a Producer

(Jerome Konecni - Genome Prairie)

Quality Feedstock for Fiber

(Alvin Ulrich - Crop Fibers Canada)

Organics in Demand

(Grant Whitmore - Bioriginal)

Bio-Fuels

(Zenneth Faye - Milligan Bio-Tech Inc.)

New Tools for the Producer

(Jim Bagshaw - NuFarm Agriculture)

The Sell Game

(Russ Crawford - AgClearing)

These presentations are available on the Crop Production Week website at www.cropweek.com.

In the tradition of Flax Day, participants were treated to a variety of flax dishes at the refreshment breaks and luncheon.

You will want to calendar January 7, 2008 for the next annual general meeting - a day to network, ask questions and find out more about leading edge opportunities for Saskatchewan's flax producers.

Your Organization Needs You

The backbone of a strong and vibrant organization is a combination of both old and new talent at the Board level. Since its inception SaskFlax has had the benefit of both. That being said, we're always looking for new talent and that's where you come in! There's no better time than the present to give some serious consideration

to putting your name forward to stand for election to the Board. A diversity of talent, location, background and interest provide the solid foundation needed for our organization to move forward and best meet the interests of ALL Saskatchewan Flax Producers. If you are a registered flax producer, let your voice be heard. For more information and nomination details contact the SaskFlax office at: saskflax@saskflax.com or contact one of the current Directors.

Flax Grower Survey – Seeding Details

In the July, 2006 issue of the Saskatchewan Flax Grower we provided some general information gathered from the flax grower survey commissioned by the Plant Breeding and Production Working Group (BPWG) of Flax Canada 2015 and carried out by Insightrix Research Services®. We thought readers would be interested in what details the survey provided in terms seeding.

Crop Rotation – Nearly half of all respondents use a four year rotation with flax with another 25% using a three year and 15% using five years or more. Only 5.5% use a two year. While the differences between top, middle and bottom groups are not major, bottom growers are slightly less likely to use a four year rotation and more likely to use a two or three year. Overall, 44% of respondents said they chose their crop rotation simply because it works best. 21% use their particular rotation for disease and/or pest control while 12% use it for weed control and 11% for soil management.

When asked why they planted flax, most respondents said it was because flax fit into their rotation. Another 41% said it was because flax is a cash crop.

Flax Varieties – The most common variety of flax seed used is CDC Bethune (48.5% of those using flax conventional systems), followed by Vimy at 10%. Of those who use the flax conventional system, 45% use certified seed and 44% use farm saved seed with 7% using foundation seed. 46% of top growers use farm saved seed compared to 33% of those in the bottom group.

The overall average percent germination was about 93%. Very few respondents reported using seed treatment.

Fertility Regime – Overall, 24% of respondents conducted soil testing on their most recent flax crop. 28% of top growers conducted soil testing compared to only 17% of bottom growers. 12% reported not applying any fertilizer at all. Of those who did, 84% did so only one time, while 16% applied them twice. 27% of those in the bottom group did not apply fertilizers. Also, top growers are slightly more likely than others to have applied fertilizers twice. The majority (84.5%) who apply fertilizers once do so in May with one third

of all respondents applying in the third week of May. Of those who apply twice, nearly half apply both times in May with another 23% applying the first time in October and the second time in May.

Of those who applied fertilizer once, nearly half used a deep or side banded application with another 35% using seed placed application. Top growers are more likely to use deep side banded application while bottom growers are most likely to use seed placed application. 31% of respondents who apply fertilizers twice use deep or side banded for the first application and seed placed for the second with another 28% using injected for the first method and seed placed for the second.

Of those who applied fertilizer once, 34% used a fertilizer rate of less than 60 pounds per acre with another 27% using a rate of 60 – 99 pounds per acre. 38% used a rate of 100 or more. The average is about 86 pounds per acre. Of those who applied fertilizer twice, the average rate for the first application was 69 pounds per acres with the average for the second application was 38 pounds per acre.

Each of the factors related to fertility regime (number of applications, application method, fertilizer rate and use of micronutrients) were analyzed to determine which are most related to productivity (yield for flax conventional system). It was found the most important thing, is simply that fertilizer was used. Those who did not apply fertilizer at all had an average yield of 17.9 bushels per acre compared to 22.7 for those who applied fertilizer once and 24.6 for those who applied twice.

Tillage Regime – Overall, 44% of respondents used a zero till regime, with 30% using minimum till and 24% using conventional till. There is a significant difference in tillage regimes of top growers as compared to bottom growers with 51% of top growers using zero till, compared to 30% of those in the bottom group. Almost 47% of respondents used an air-drill for seed with 33% an air seeder and 10% a double disc press drill. 58.5% of top growers used an air-drill. The average fan speed for both air-seeders and air-drills is approximately 3000 RPM. The majority of respondents indicated the implement speed used for seeding as 5 MPH. About two thirds used a packing method after seeding and nearly one quarter harrowed.

After analyzing the data it was found that using an air-drill has the most significantly positive impact on yield while using conventional till has the most negative impact.

Seeding – Most respondents begin seeding flax in the second or third week of May. The earliest is the third week of April and the latest the fourth week of June. The average seeding rate for the flax conventional system is about 42 pounds/acre. It did not differ significantly between top, middle and bottom growers. The overall average seeding depth for flax conventional system is about one inch.

Weeds – Respondents were asked to identify their top 3 most problematic weeds for their flax crops. In total 64% indicated wild oats were one of the three with thistle, buckwheat and kochia claiming problem weed status. More than three in four respondents used post-emergence control methods. 29% used pre-seed methods, 15% used pre-harvest methods and 12% used cultural methods. 6% did not use any control methods. About three quarters of those who applied herbicides did so at one time, another 18% twice and 6% applied herbicides three times. Most herbicide applications were in the second or third week of June with the most common herbicide used being Buctril M, followed by Poast Ultra and Select. Overall, 71% of respondents estimated some yield loss due to weeds.

Analysis of the data found that those who did not apply any herbicides at all had an average yield of 17 bushels per acre compared to 23 for those who applied herbicides once or more and there is not a significant difference between those who applied one, two or three times.

Insects – Sixty-five percent of all respondents inspected their fields for insects, and to most they were not a major problem. Of those who reported insect problems, the most common was grasshoppers. Overall 84% of both top and bottom growers indicated they did not lose any yield due to insects.

Disease – Fifty-three percent of all respondents inspected their flax fields for disease. Most respondents who did inspect did not have any problems. Only 15 respondents indicated diseases that caused problems, with five mentioning Pusmo.

Flax Checkoff Deadlines

Period 1 February 28, 2007

Period 2 August 31, 2007

Application forms are available by contacting SaskFlax at:

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2007/2008 Board of Directors

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The bright and lively crown of the sheaf of flax represents the coming together of many members into a solid organization.



SaskFlax well as the close interaction between members of the organization.

The boll of the plant, made up of three oil droplet shapes, represents oil-based products as well as the overlapping areas of production, research and marketing.

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