WHY TWO-ROW BARLEY?

Shelly Wetmore

As a producer, a common call to receive is someone looking to purchase feed barley. At first, the price is right, the pick-up period is convenient, and the buyer is a reliable one. Then, they ask, "Is that a 2-row barley or a 6-row barley?" To your dismay, your 6-row barley doesn't measure up. More and more feedlots are asking for a 2-row variety barley for their finishing programs. Arthur and Sheila Pierson own and operate a feedlot in the Ferintosh area and also prefer, two-row varieties.

Benefits of Two-Row

A two-row barley is easier to roll. The mere uniformity of kernels (weight and plumpness) can save a feedlot time and money.

First, efficiency is increased as operators waste less time adjusting rollers.

Second, by not frequently adjusting rollers, costly outcomes are avoided. There are mechanical restrictions involved. Rollers for barley have a narrow groove. If they're adjusted too tight, then essentially the rollers begin to grind the barley. If the grooves are opened widely, too many thins sneak through without being processed. Thins and fines in finishing rations can lead to digestibility and ruminant problems.

Starch

Kernel size, shape, and weight determine the starch content within each kernel. The more starch in each kernel, the better conversion to energy for cattle. The better energy conversion for the cattle, the better the finishing program.

When tempered, the short, stubby kernel (2-row) producesa nice, flat flake with less starch content, can shatter and result in more fines.

Few 6-row varieties of barley have heavy, plump, uniform kernels. Right off the bat, there are three different kernel sizes. The first two can be readily processed. The third kernel size has to be handled differently, again, decreasing efficiency and economy.

Arthur and Sheila Pierson, Ferintosh, Alberta

With a 2-row barley, even a bushel weight of 46 – 47 lb can be very plump, containing more starch, thus equaling more energy value for the cattle versus a 52 lb, thin, 6-row variety with less starch content.

Tough Barley

Although dry feed barley is the standard purchased, barley is often brought to 18% to 20% moisture before being rolled. So why can't tough barley off the farm be sold without a discount?

Extremely tough barley out of the bin will turn to mushif rolled because the whole kernel is wet. When barley is tempered, only the outside of the kernel is moist. Think of soaking barley at home for soup, for example. If you soaked your barley overnight, then hit it with a hammer, it would turn to mush. However, if you soaked your barley in a glass of water for an hour or so, the hammer would cause it just to flatten out. More surface area of the barley flake is exposed making it more available to the enzymes of the cow's stomach.

Percentage Plump

If you want to check the plumpness of your barley, purchase a #6 and #5 screen (and the bottom pan if you don't already have one). Place a representative 500 gram sample of your barley in the top screen. The #6 is the top screen, the #5 is the center screen, and the bin is the bottom. Shake the ensemble 18 times back and forth. If the result is 400 grams in the top screen, for example, your barley is 80% plump. If the result is 450 grams remaining in the top screen, your barley is 90% plump. What remains in the bottom bin would be your dockage. This will give you a good idea on how plump your barley is.

PURPLE POWER

Shelly Wetmore

Mention flaxseed as part of producer's crop rotation and many just shake their heador return your gaze with a blank stare. Traditionally, flax has not been a popular crop to grow here in Alberta but consumer demand, along with strong prices, have made farmers revisit their opinions about this purple-flowered crop. The demand has slowly increased as have Alberta acres in production.

Flax prices we've seen in the past look like this:

	Price Per Bushel	
Crop Year	From	To
1999-2000	$5.00	$5.50
2000-2001	$6.00	$7.00
2001-2002	$9.00	$9.50
2003-2004	$8.50	$10.00
2004-2005	$10.00	$17.00
2005-2006	$5.50	$7.50

Gerald Soetaert, St. Albert

Gerald grew flax for the first time this year. He set his sights on flax as a crop that might bring him a better return – nothing to do with rotation. So, what were his results?

"So far, this year, flax was not a big benefit. My oats have been a more profitable crop for me and the canola yielded so high, it also out-performed the flax. I think the flax didn't yield as well due to shortage of moisture. At 20 bushels to the acre, $7.00/bu isn't that profitable. If I can market it at a higher price in the summer, it will be a better deal."

Flax comes with its own unique challenges. Gerald learned it took double the time to combine;it was even slower than peas. "As soon as you go too fast," he said, "the combine throws it out the back. I had to learn to make adjustments to the equipment to combine properly."

"The straw is hard to handle and hard to bale," he added. "We'll use some of the bales as wind break for the cattle." The only options to handle the straw that Gerald was aware of was baling or burning. He did comment, though, that a local hog producer has plans to eventually take flax bales and burn them as a source of their heating for their hog barns.

This first-time flax grower from St. Albert is willing to try a little more flax this spring but thinks he'll need another year's experience before committing additional acres. "Flax definitely falls in the category of a specialty product when it comes to marketing," Gerald says.

Gerald Soetaert, St. Albert, Alberta

Doug Clemens, Mossleigh

Doug also considers himself a beginner flax grower. "The last time we grew flax was back in the mid-1980's," Doug says. "Straw handling was the biggest deterrent from keeping flax as part of a regular rotation in the past, plus, other crops were just more attractive. This year, I wanted another broadleaf crop in my rotation as we've been maxing out on canola and peas. We went to flax because it also has a different harvest window."

Was flax a successful choice for this Southern Alberta farmer? "Well," Doug laughed, "we got hailed on 50% yet the crop still yielded 20 bu/ac but I haven't moved much yet. The input costs are less expensive than canola … there's no TUA (technology use agreement) and I can use my own seed. With the inputs being lower, I don't have to gross as much to make a similar return. Plus, I can straight cut it rather than swathing." Like Gerald, Doug also grimaces about the straw issue.

Mel Erickson, Irma

Mel has 14 years experience growing flaxseed. He agrees that the straw is an issue withmost producers but he doesn't have a problem. "Dr. Jill Clapperton, a soil specialist at the University of Lethbridge, told me about the many benefits of flax and one of them was that earthworms like flax better than any other crop. There's a lot more information out there now espousing the benefits of flax straw in your soil than there used to be."

This seasoned grower agrees flax straw is an issue but he's resolved it. "My TX66 New Holland combine has the best chopper on the market. It costs a little money to maintain it but it chops very fine. Later, if the stubble is dry, I can seed right through. Straight cutting works much better than swathing but you need to wait two to three weeks if the flax is desiccated or after a hard frost. Then it's easier to cut."

One quirk Mel has picked up on over the years is in regards to row spacing. "If I had a choice," he said, "I'd prefer to seed 12 inch spacing for all crops but flax is one crop that does better with narrow spacing so I'm able to do it with 10 ½ inch spacing. For flax, if it was even possible, I'd seed with 6 inch spacing. The yield potential is higher with narrower row spacing."

Another note from Mel is that flax is not very responsive to changes in fertilizer. In his experience, he has tried extra phosphate to hurry the maturity but it didn't make much of a difference, nor did extra nitrogen help with the yield. "Fifty pounds of nitrogen is usually the maximum," he says.

Mike Kueber, Killam

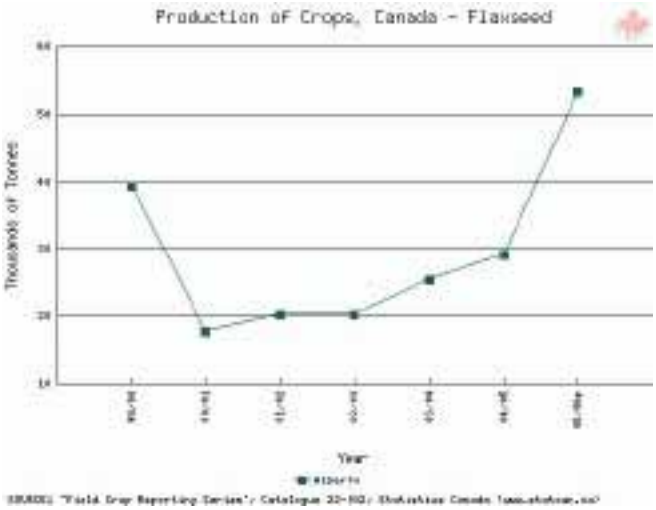
This year has been Mike's first year at growing flax. He was initially enticed by the higher prices seen over the past number of years. He decided to try direct marketing himself and branded his CDC Bethune flax as "Show Glow." He sells 25 kg flax bags at $17.95/bag to race tracks for the pony market and has been quite successful with his endeavour. "My customers are quite pleased when I come by" said Mike, "as they've been buying ground flax at the grocery store for substantially more money. Horses can eat whole flax. Their teeth easily grind it and what does come out whole is very nominal." Mike intends to expand his production acres and marketing this year. He also mentioned a proposed flax burning plant for his Killam area in one or two years could help relieve any straw issues.

Flax Production/Marketing

Flax production has risen in Alberta over the last number of years and some of the production difficulties are subsiding.

Some farmers are taking flax marketing into their own hands, direct to the retail market. In addition to traditional markets of flour mills, feed mills, and processors for the flax oil, some end users include overseas companies and local livestock markets.

Overall, in my opinion, flax is a specialty crop. It has frustrated many grain producers with its straw problems but these issues seem to be resolving themselves as more research results come to light. Consumer demand for flax, due to the crop's health benefits, continues to increase and production is up. The marketing aspect, though is still sporadic. Be prepared to hold, then sell when the opportunities arise. I just think of the fortunate farmers last year when one SuperB of flax traveling down the highway represented $28,000 in someone's bank account – a rare, but gratifying moment.



THE PERFECT MILLING OAT

Shelly Wetmore

I've never seen such problems with moisture, heating, and other situations, which ultimately lead to discounts on the grain's price, as with this current crop year. When it comes to milling oats, the problems were very similar and very frustrating for most oat producers. Even after attempts to resolve the problem, for example, putting oats on air for numerous weeks to get the moisture down, the grain was still tough and incurred moisture discounts. What should a producer beaware of to help reduce potential problems so discounts are not part of the equation? The last thing a grain producer needs nowadays with already low prices and high inputs are discounts.

I asked Keith Aspen, Elevator Manager, Can-Oat Milling to provide answers and solutions to some of the common frustrations experienced by farmers. Remember, we're talking about milling oats, human consumption oats not pony oats, not feed oats. These are the oats that end up in your child's cereal, on your kitchen table. Hopefully, the oats you've seeded are of a milling variety. Non-milling varieties tend to have a thick hull content, are very high in fat, and have a tight hull adherence, and can results in many discounts.

Swathing

Oats with a tinge of green is usually something most farmers turn their nose up at and then continue to play the waiting game when it comes to swathing but Keith Aspen says this does not have to be the case in every situation. "Some years, the hulls towards the bottom of the plant may have some green colour on the outside. It does not necessarily indicate the maturity of the groat inside. Look at the lower kernels of the plant, separate the groat from the hull. If the groat has an even, creamy colour, the oats are mature. However, if there's green on the end of the groat, the oats are not fully mature." Keith says when green-tipped groats go to the kiln for processing; they turn black when steam is applied. This produces unwanted black oat flakes. Allowing oats to stand as long as possible results in a better test weight and better maturity of the groat.

Keith Aspen, Elevator Manager, Can-Oat Milling, Saskatoon

Combining

If you're a serious malt barley grower, then you can relate to this next issue surround milling oats and combining. Oats have a very porous hull. They dry quickly, and take on moisture just as quick. Keith says, "The best oat growers adjust the speed lower of the combine cylinder or rotor several times throughout the day. On a good, dry day, it results in a lower dehull count. As evening approaches, the speed is gradually increased."

Sampling

As with any grain … keep representative samples! Oat mills require samples prior to delivery to ensure they meet milling specifications. An ice cream pail under the auger as the oats dump into the bin or the trucks works nicely, a hand in the door to obtain a sample does not work.

Moisture

Each mill can have different overall specifications, including their tolerance for moisture levels before a discount applies. I recommend the producer double check tolerances always and on a yearly rotation to ensure confirm milling specifications.

Unlike other instances in grain practice, human consumption milling oats are not suitable for paper blending. If one bin is 14% moisture and the other bin is 12% moisture, the two do not make 13% moisture.

"Paper blending is a common process in the regular grain elevator system," explains Keith, "but not common with milling oats. High moisture oats result in higher counts of slivers or pieces of oat hulls. The allowable specification food companies allow us, the mill, for hull slivers or pieces is very small. As a consumer, you wouldn't want to open a cereal box or oat snack bar to find oat hulls in it.

Plus, to set huller speeds at a mill is extremely difficult with blended moistures. Only in theory," Keith emphasizes, "can you have equal amounts of 14% oats and 12% oats to

blend on paper and obtain 13%. In real life, the different kernels really have different moisture levels with vastly different hulling characteristics. If the huller speed is set to dehull dry oats, the tough oats will not dehull on the first round through and will have to be put back through a second time. On the second pass, the hullers are set at a higher speed, resulting in higher breakage."

Here in the office at Market Master, we've run into a number of farmers using old moisture charts as well. For Model 919 elevator type testers, the proper chart to use is dated August 2001 and is available from the Canadian Grain Commission. A producer on farm is satisfied the oats test dry, yet when the truck arrives at the mill, the moisture becomes a problem, and the producer is baffled and discounted. Keith adds it's extremely important when using a hot air grain dryer that the high heat temperatures are not used. Maximum drying temperatures for oats are 50 degrees Celsius. Lower temperatures result in better quality oats in the end.

An important note: Effective August 1, 2006 Can-Oat Milling's specification for dry oats will be 13.5% for dry.

Dehull

At Can-Oat Milling, their maximum specification for dehulls is 6% before a discount is incurred. What's so important about that and whydo oats incur a discount over and above that specification? The elevator manager explains dehull is the most important factor to determine ultimate shelf life of the finished, consumer product. "The oat hull acts as a protective cover for the groat inside. The raw groat contains fatty enzymes that (when exposed to air) start to go rancid which in turn affects the overall shelf life of the product. Only by heat treating the raw groats in the kilning process can this chemical process be terminated.

"Also, because the dehulled raw groat is smaller than an oat with the hull on, it is similar in size to any wheat or barley present and a portion of this dehulled oat is cleaned out and sent out as screenings – a direct loss to the company. If the oats contain greater than the allowable specification of 6% dehull, then the load is discounted to cover part of the loss incurred during the clean out."

Sound

Sound is the calculation of exactly what percentage of the sample is good, useable oats. "A sample is weighed, then hand-picked to separate any wheat, barley, wild oats, other grains, and damaged oats from the sample. When these are all separated out from the oat sample, they are weighed to determine a percentage. This percentage is subtracted from 100 to achieve a sound percentage. Our #2 CW specification requires a minimum of 96% sound' #3 CW at 94%, #4 CW at 90% sound," relays Keith.

He also mentioned "ad mix" or admixture specifications. He says the food companies have very low tolerances for wheat or barley left in the finished product. The size of the other grains, determines how well these admixtures clean out of the oats. The thinner or smaller the wheat or barley kernel, the harder it is to clean out, increasing the chance of ending up in the product. Due to the gluten available in both wheat and barley, these admixes are classified as an allergen. Remember, some people have gluten allergies and these admixes could prove dangerous to them.

Storage and Hauling

After the combining is complete, it's important to store the oats in a safe place. On dry ground, covered is only a good temporary solution and should be moved to a bin as quickly as possible to prevent weathering. When transporting your milling oats to the mill, inspect the inside of any trailer used for items such as fertilizer, other grain, glass, and such. One piece of fertilizer found under a tarp lip, for example, is an automatic rejection. Glass, though, is undetectable. If you're using a custom hauler, ask if the trailer has ever hauled glass. It is virtually impossible to clean it out 100% and should never be used for human consumption oats. Would you like microscopic pieces of glass in your cereal? Additionally, ensure the auger used on farm is flushed out with water if previously used to auger fertilizer or treated seed.

Ultimately, the more a producer understands the ins and out of producing milling oats and the specifications that must be adhered to, the more confident he becomes to deliver the oats to a mill and not receive any discounts. Ultimately, the oats seen in fields across Alberta do end up in your grocery cart and on your family's kitchen table. Keith Aspen says, "Why would you want to sell something to us that you wouldn't feed to your own family?"

I'm very happy to have Can-Oat Milling, formerly with mills only in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, now operating their third facility in the Barrhead, Alberta area. Currently, fall pricing to the new location is: $1.90/bu delivered August and September, $1.85/bu delivered October, $1.90/bu delivered November, and $1.95/bu delivered December. Let's see some great milling oats this year!

THE FUTURE OF FEED PEAS

Shelly Wetmore

They taste great fresh from the garden, are delicious in soup, and provide us with many nutrients … but what do feed peas provide for livestock and why aren't they used more often in rations? A few different groups and projects in Alberta and Canada are coming together to benefit the entire Western Canadian feed pea industry.

Feed Pea Network

First, a welcomed group, the Feed Pea Network, has been formed to answer these questions and build a comprehensive alliance between feed pea producers, traders, and end users. Pulse Canada, Alberta Pulse Growers (APG), Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (SPG), and Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta, the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development and the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council under Agriculture and Agri Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Food (ACAAF) program have all partnered to fund the program. Krista Ivey, Director, Feed Pea Network, heads up the Feed Pea Network and is already a familiar face across Alberta, visiting with invested stakeholders.

NIRS

At the same time, Ruurd Zijlstra and Jim Helm from the University of Alberta are project leaders for a feed quality evaluation project using NIRS (near infra-red reflectance spectroscopy) technology which focuses on the nutrient value (net energy) of feed peas for livestock.

Evaluation

Plus, past fall, Alberta Pulse Growers had been hard at work, gathering over one hundred feed pea samples from across Alberta. Janette McDonald, Director, Marketing Committee, coordinated the project and was also pleased to announce funding of $4.6 million dollars from ACIDF in September to fund the Feed Quality Evaluation Program. The samples collected by APG will provide the base for NIRS evaluations slated to begin in January 2007.

Krista Ivey, Director, Feed Pea Network, Pulse Canada

Working Together

So, what's the common goal between these groups and projects? The object is to identify and communicate the actual value of feed peas. Pea growers will benefit as one outcome would be expanded markets and value for their feed pea product. Pea users will have verifiable data (as documented by NIRS) to identify the true nutrient value of feed peas compared to other substitutable ration components.

In a December meeting to the APG Marketing Committee, Dr. Zijlstra presented highlights of his NIRS feed quality evaluation project. The problem, he stated, was that feed was not currently being traded based on any rational quality assessment for the end user which results in a price not based on true nutritional value. The solution would be to use NIRS technology for rapid, accurate evaluation of the feed. The outcome of this testing could provide a beneficial feed quality grid, and designer feed formulations, processing, and crops for both growers and end users. The collected feed pea samples from APG, thus, will provide a good calibration sample set and the digestible nutrients can be measured in a scientific method. The livestock industry will need this type information, especially in light of industry changes due to the "biodiesenol" bandwagon and accompanying DDG by-products.

Feed peas, supported by NIRS documentation, should act as a more effective energy component in rations compared to other options. For example, we may see a farm fish feed crunch within 10 years and fish don't do as well on feed with a high concentrate of fibre, which DDGs contain. Pea concentrate, on the other hand, is at 80% protein. Another example is in hog rations. Peas have energy for hogs while DDGs just don't have the same profile.

Pulse Canada

Krista Ivey, Pulse Canada, will use this information and work with the network's advisory group to discuss and initiate action to improve the relative feed value of feed peas. Members of the advisory group are:

(Continued from page 1)

- *Alberta Pulse Growers*
- *Saskatchewan Pulse Growers*
- *Toepfer International*
- *Agricore United*
- *Big Sky Farms Inc.*
- *Hytek Ltd.*
- *Unifeed*
- *Cargill Animal Nutrition*
- *University of Alberta*
- *University of Saskatchewan*
- *Prairie Swine Centre Inc.*

Areas of focus for the Feed Pea Network include:

Network Collaboration

Develop a network where feed pea industry stakeholders can discuss and initiate action on items that improve the relative feed value of feed peas.

Market Intelligence

Identify knowledge and utilization gaps impacting the maximization of feed pea values in both the domestic and international markets.

Research

Identify, guide and prioritize research efforts for the pulse industry with respect to feed in the areas of animal nutrition, plant breeding and economics.

Communications

Develop and implement a communication's strategy to ensure that feed pea information is communicated to all stakeholders both in the domestic and global marketplaces.

Summary

What does all this really mean for Alberta pea producers and end users? There are a number of beneficial results, some are:

- *The end user has scientific data to use when formulating rations. Feed peas will prove very effective for many livestock rations.*
- *The producer will have expanded markets at home, even abroad.*
- *Both will have access to price discovery and firmer market channels.*

The framework of the Feed Pea Network should be congratulated on its process. Here, you have producers, processors, end users, and others in the industry, all working together towards a common goal – to improve some aspect of our agricultural industry, in a win-win situation. In this case, feed peas are the big winner!

Ramadan		
Year	Start	End
2001	Nov 17	Dec 16
2002	Nov 06	Dec 06
2003	Oct 27	Nov 25
2004	Oct 15	Nov 14
2005	Oct 05	Nov 03
2006	Sep 24	Oct 24
2007	Sep 13	Oct 13
2008	Sep 01	Oct 01
2009	Aug 22	Sep 20
2010	Aug 12	Sep 10
2011	Aug 01	Aug 31
2012	Jul 21	Aug 19
2013	Jul 10	Aug 08
2014	Jun 29	Jul 28
2015	Jun 18	Jul 17

RYE FOR BAKING

Shelly Wetmore

Yes, there are other uses for rye besides the process that processes it into bottles displayed on every liquor store shelf in Alberta. In addition to rye for distilling, there's rye for milling. And just like every other grain, milling rye has its own set of specifications that make it suitable for this application.

Most producers have heard of the term "falling number" in relation to wheat and the milling process for flour but what about rye? Some mills use a "peak viscosity" or "malt index" to value the quality of rye suitable for the baking industry.

There's an enzyme that naturally occurs in nearly all plants and animals called alpha amylase. This enzyme, found in rye, is involved in the conversion of starch Its activity varies according to the quality of the rye. Conditions like excessive moisture or frost damage has a direct affect on the activity of alpha amylase. The enzyme chemically interacts with flour during the baking process to convert starch into sugar. Too much alpha amylase produces a sticky bread and too little alpha amylase produces a crumbly loaf. It's important, then, for the mill to be aware of how the enzyme is going to react with the flour so the miller can produce an excellent loaf of bread for your table.

One Mill's Perspective

At Rogers Foods Ltd, in British Columbia, the mill uses an Amylograph to measure the alpha amylase activity in an aqueous suspension of flour as it gelatinizes during heating. The amlyograph value (peak viscosity or PV) is inversely correlated with the alpha amylase activity. What does this mean? Simply, the machine measures the quality of your rye to determine if it's suitable for any of Roger's food products.

Derek Webb procures rye for Rogers' flour production. "I look for particular specifications in the rye," he said. "The most important details are:

- *the PV must have a measurement of 800 Brabender units or better;*
- *colour must be a greenish-blue (a customer generated preference) versus the browner colours;*
- *the kernel must have a good size and appear plump;*
- *the rye must be fairly clean (wild oats and ergot are difficult to clean out);*
- *protein levels should test in the 8% range;*
- *no musty smell can be evident."*

Rogers Foods products can be found in most flour sections of the supermarket. They produce both light and dark rye milling flour. The dark rye simply has more bran in it. Every mill has its own specifications, therefore, it is very important to submit rye samples to each prospective buyer.

Producers in Alberta are taking a second look at this crop, production is steadily increasing in Alberta and, some years, the prices put big smiles on farmers' faces.

Newbrook, Alberta

Darwin and Dalton Trenholm , Park Lane Farms, have grown rye for many years and plan to continue to grow the fall seeded crop whenever possible.

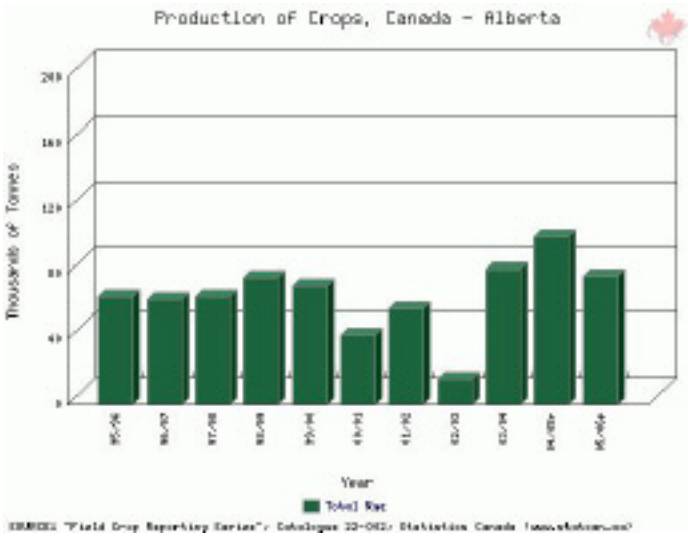
"There are three major reasons why we grow rye," Darwin said. "First, it becomes an additional crop to our marketing strategy.

Second, fall rye diversifies our timing by planting later in the year. It spreads our workloadaround because we're seeding the last week of August or the first week of September. We then have less land to seed the following spring when we're busy with other crops.

Amlyograph-E
Picture courtesy of Brabender® GmbH & Co.KG, www.brabender.com

Third, it makes our farm money. Our gross revenue is $40/acre more than feed barley. We treat our fall rye as a high management crop, just like all of our other crops. The fall rye gets full attention. It is definitely not treated as an afterthought, something you'd put in at the last minute. We've gone from standard recommendations and have increased the fertility requirements and management requirements to increase our yields. We try to put in fall rye every year. However, we plant it on pea stubble and if we haven't been able to harvest the peas in time, we're unfortunately unable to seed the rye."

Darwin and Dalton Trenholm, Park Lane Farms, Newbrook, Alberta



(Continued from page 1)

I asked Darwin if he thought there was any downside to the crop and he came up with a few points. "Ergot is commonly found in rye which is a definite negative," he said. "Plus, there's a tremendous amount of straw. We chop it and put it back. Plus, if the straw is quite tough, it leaves a thick mat of matter on top and requires tillage to work it in. Another area difficult with rye is the marketing is not quite as easy as with other crops and requires more effort and patience."

Alliance, Alberta

Lloyd O'Reilly area has grown rye regularly for over 35 years. His reasons for growing rye are similar to Park Lane Farms. "It's a cheap crop to grow," says Lloyd, "and off-season it works out pretty good for seeding in the fall then harvesting before anything else is ready. It gives me the freedom to spread my work load around. The inputs are reduced with rye. The price is generally lower compared to other crops but with the reduced input cost and a good yield, the bottom line makes rye worthwhile every time. I also get a good catch on rye and it chokes out the wild oats. Not much can compete with it."

Is there a downside about rye for Lloyd? "Well," he said, if there happens to be a frost in June when the rye is in blossom, it will generally cut the yields down to half or more. One year, we had a hard frost in June and I had to cut the rye for feed. Also, a bout of wet weather after swathing can cause the rye to sprout fairly easily."

As consumers become more and more health conscience, the demand for products that contain rye (and other "specialty" crops) is on the increase. For the rye producer, it's a simple matter of putting pen to paper to determine the bottom line. If your rye doesn't make milling specifications, then it's off to the feed market where the prices can be considerably lower. Talk to rye growers in your own particular area for their advice and remember to submit samples to every potential buyer in the milling market.

TRUCKERS & FREIGHT

Shelly Wetmore

Nothing is more satisfying to a grain producer than watching a SuperB show up on time … with a qualified driver. Freight from the farm, to an end destination, is another part of the grain marketing equation which is often overlooked and undervalued.

We deal with all types of truckers and freight companies on a daily basis. Sooner or later, one notices the differences between the companies. After "loads" of experience, the value of a proficient organization and professional trucker is apparent. But what does the trucker say? From a hauler's perspective, what makes a good farm pickup experience? What has changed in the industry?

Greg Broughton , owner of SWG Custom Grain Hauling , Donalda, exemplifies a fantastic grain hauling company. Greg is in a unique position as besides hauling grain, he is also a grain farmer. He carries with him the trials and tribulations of a grain farmer as well as the difficulties and enjoyment that come with custom hauling.

Since the closure of many community elevators, custom haulers have become a common sight on any highway in Alberta. The old practice of a grain farmer moving 42 MT tonnes of grain to the local elevator, using a 5 MT truck, going back and forth, back and forth, is gone. It's simply not practical to use that size of truck to move contracted grain to the new super elevator over 70 miles away - hence, the custom hauler.

With these changes in the rural landscape come other difficulties. Greg says some yards aren't designed to handle the arrival of the large SuperBs. Upon arrival, he says, you see beautiful rows of trees but access to the actual grain bins is not easy. Often, only a good, experienced driver can make the right moves to load the grain.

Broughton takes pride in his equipment, his SuperB, just as the grain farmer takes pride in his combine or seeder. A shiny truck does not signify the trucker is rolling in the dough or charging an arm and a leg for his service. What it means is the company maintains its equipment. It means the chances of mechanical failure are reduced to a minimum. (I'd be a little upset, too, to drive into a yard, with the beautiful row of trees, then leave the yard with big scratches along the side of my pride and joy.)

Greg Broughton, SWG Custom Grain Hauling, Donalda, AB

Loading grain on farm has other issues, one is the time factor. For a trucker, time is money, and everything is on a strict schedule. Assuming the trucker is responsible from his end (which includes confirming pick-up time a day or two prior to arrival then arriving at the allotted time), the producer has responsibilities as well:

- ***ensure the grain is ready to go – have the bin butts already consolidated into one bin or one truck for loading***
- ***use a good auger – 6 inches or greater, don't overlook the importance of upgrading the auger as other farm equipment is maintained as the farm grows***

Broughton says, "loading a 42 MT truck should take less than one hour. After one and a half hours of time, producers should expect an extra hourly rate for manhours."

"What's the best part about your job?" I asked Greg.

"I really enjoy seeing different operations, meeting the people, and seeing how creative farmers can be. Often, I drive away with applications I've seen used on a producer's operation that I can use and modify for my own grain farm. There are many, many talented people out there. Plus, I enjoy the driving part!" says Greg.

A reliable customer grain hauler is an important part of any farm operation – especially in timely situations. Any producer can relate stories of trying to track down freight during harvest or when the call comes from an elevator that needs wheat delivered yesterday.

Treating the custom grain hauler like the professional he is can be rewarded when the service is required in a moment's notice.

Custom Haulers			
Greg Broughton	SWG Custom Grain Hauling	Donalda	780-878-4737
Darcy Brisson	Darcy Brisson Trucking	Legal	780-699-4680
Keith Creasy	Hillcrest Transport	Irma	780-806-3451
Ron Desaulniers		Falher	780-876-3816
Gil Desharnais	Triple G Trucking	High Prairie	780-837-1777
Eric Donovan	Wintara Farms	Blackie	403-809-0441
Joe Fisher	Joe Fisher Trucking	Barrhead	780-674-0693
Jaret Forth	Parkside Transport	Wetaskiwin	780-387-6032
Donnie Heimstra	Graydon Trucking	Barrhead	780-674-0708
Darryl Klapstra	Long Vista Trucking	Lacombe	403-357-7557
Ron Konynenbelt	RTK Trucking	Nobleford	403-824-3344
Jim Olson	DA Olson Trucking	Camrose	780-679-7316
Wayne Perdue	RWD Trucking	Red Deer	403-347-9857
Brian Pillsworth	Pillsworth Trucking	Coronation	403-575-0022
Denver Polson	Vision Truck Lines	Lacombe	403-782-7988
Travis Sandum	TLS Trucking	Hussar	403-321-0111
Greg Sjogren	Sjogren Farms	Edberg	780-878-1689
Tyler Spargo	TG Spargo	Busby	780-975-3278
Rolland Sutley	Roll-Mar Trucking	Bashaw	780-679-4584
Willy Yakimetz	Wilco Enterprises	Vegreville	780-603-0060

Freight Rates		
	Rate per MT	
Miles	2007	2002
0-30	$7.00	$5.00
31-40	$7.75	$6.00
41-50	$9.00	$7.00
51-60	$10.00	$8.00
61-80	$11.00	$9.25
81-100	$12.50	$10.50
101-120	$13.75	$11.75
121-140	$15.00	$13.00
141-160	$17.50	$14.25
161-180	$18.50	$15.50
181-200	$20.00	$16.75
201-225	$21.50	$18.00
226-250	$23.00	$19.25
251-275	$24.50	$20.50
276-300	$26.00	$21.75