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## Pest Monitoring in Western Canada

Western Canadian farmers depend on many tools to sustainably produce high yielding, quality crops for the global marketplace. One such strategy involves a toolbox called Integrated Crop Management (ICM). Its feature is the practical control of pest populations by bringing together the best aspects of one or more control methods (chemical, biological, cultural, varietal resistance) in an ecologically sound manner.



SwedeMidge- shrivelled florets - Tyler Wist, AAFC-Saskatoon

A pest is any organism that is invasive, detrimental, destructive, and troublesome! Pests, in order of economic importance are insects, mites, nematodes, and gastropods. To find out more, we talked with Dr. Owen Olfert, research scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Saskatoon. He said "Arthropods (insects and mites) are biotic stressors of all crops grown in Canada. Their pest status is extremely variable due to the large number of factors involved in pest - host and plant - weather interactions. "

Farmers are concerned with two things when it comes to pest management: Economic injury levels, which are the smallest number of insects (amount of injury) that will cause yield losses equal to the insect management costs; and Economic threshold, the pest density at which management action should be taken to prevent an increasing pest population from reaching the economic injury level." ( Source: Entomological Society of America "Handbook of Soybean Insect Pests," Leon G. Higley and David J. Boethel (Editors))

Olfert noted, "Pest management systems are designed to sensibly protect crops, not to achieve 100% removal of a pest species. This, in turn, highlights the need for sound monitoring technologies." AAFC (Saskatoon,

Beaverlodge, Lethbridge), and provincial entomologists (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia Peace, and University of Alberta) are conducting a five year effort entitled 'Coordinated surveillance, forecasting and risk warning systems for field crop insect pests of the Prairie Ecosystem'.

Initiated in 2014, the project is designed to coordinate prairie-wide insect surveillance programs in order to keep the Canadian agriculture industry informed of the risks to crop production from pest species and to highlight and conserve their natural enemies.

Developing new technologies and fine tuning current risk assessment and decision support tools plays a strategic role in promoting the adoption of ICM. Routine use of risk assessment tools results in more sensible pesticide-use decisions, leading to production systems with reduced input costs that address concerns regarding a safe, sustainable, and environmentally friendly food/bio-resource supply.

Dynamic pest forecasts and risk assessments contribute both to the decision-making process at the agro-industry and farm level. Risk assessments also improve transfer and adoption of agricultural technology by providing current and relevant information. The impact and degree of adoption will be reflected in the state of readiness of the industry to threats from these crop pests. The absence of scientifically sound methods of risk assessment and decision support tools may result in unnecessary pesticide application and added input costs.



opened floret with swede midge larva- Tyler Wist, AAFC-SRDC

Using the data collected, timely risk warnings are provided as risk maps (prairie-wide, provincial and regional) and accompanied with interpretive text. Knowledge and information on pest status, occurrence, forecasting tools, risk assessment analyses, and other outputs arising from the project are made available by e-mail, posted to the Insect Pest Monitoring Network webpage hosted by the Western Forum on Pest Management's website, posted to the Western Grains Research Foundation website, SaskCanola website and the Alberta Canola Producers Commission website. The Weekly Updates are also linked to newsletters, and e-mails circulated by the Alberta Pest Surveillance Network, Western Grains Research Foundation, and Canola Council of Canada. Past and present Weekly updates are located at: <http://www.westernforum.org/IPMNWeeklyUpdates.html>

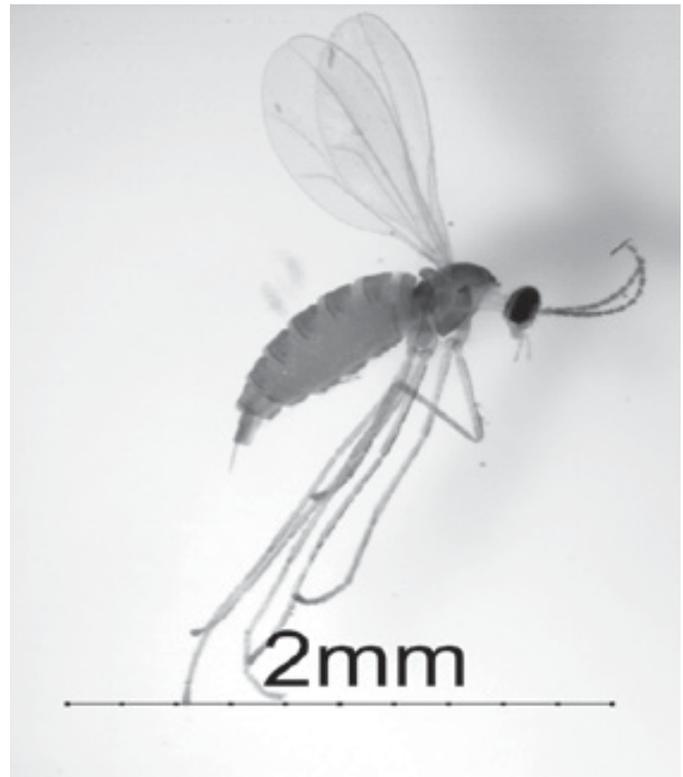
The insect population data gathered and compiled during the project contributes significantly to the development of bio-climate simulation models, which have been successfully utilized to predict the distribution and establishment of insect pests and their natural enemies in new environments and their response to a changing climate. Bioclimatic modeling has the ability to identify broad regions where potential pest outbreaks could develop. This information can then be used to plan mitigation strategies to limit introduction and/or further development of crop pest issues.

All data relating to insect populations are compiled and directly incorporated into a compendium for analysis of factors influencing population increase and decrease over time. It currently has records of about 15 million insect data points (taxonomy, geo-referenced coordinates, date, crop, sample method, researcher/



Olfert Sweeping

institution) and the respective meteorological data across 71 million acres within the Prairie Eco-zone. To date, the compiled data has positively impacted the scope of AAFC research, the state of readiness of the industry to threats from these crop pests, and has supported policy programs. In turn, the compendium has the potential to enhance sustainable management



Swede midge (bugwood) adult - Susan Ellis, USDA-APHIS-PQ

of future pest issues related to climate change, new or changing agronomic practices and new crops that can affect pest populations and diversity of beneficial arthropods.

The conversation then moved to what is the current insect situation on the Canadian prairies. Olfert said "We consistently monitor distribution and density of grasshoppers, wheat midge, cabbage seedpod weevil, bertha armyworm, pea leaf weevil, wheat stem sawfly and diamondback moth. Of these species, cabbage seedpod weevil, grasshoppers and pea leaf weevil have a fairly high pest status in Alberta, but much less so in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

When asked what might be the next pest of concern, Olfert replied "Probably swede midge (*Contarinia nasturtii*) in canola. This midge is just beginning to spread around the prairies. It is already a big issue in Ontario and Quebec in crucifer vegetable crops and canola. It has yet to reach economic levels out west, but we're keeping track of population distribution and density and assessing biological control options."

Prairie Pest Monitoring Network Blog:

<http://prairiepestmonitoring.blogspot.ca/>

The Insect Field Guide:

[http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2015/aac-aafc/A59-23-2015-PDF1-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/aac-aafc/A59-23-2015-PDF1-eng.pdf)



# CALLING ALL OAT GROWERS\*!

After the December Climate Change Conference in Paris, it is expected that Canada will increase its commitments to addressing climate change. While it is impossible to predict what commitments Canada may make, we do want to make sure that any new regulations do not burden farmers, therefore, data is required to provide benchmark evidence on how farmers have reduced carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. In order to do this successfully, we need the assistance of the oat producers like you.

The University of Saskatchewan is seeking oat grower participation in their online survey on crop rotation practices across Canada. Below is a link to participate in the online survey. Responses will

be kept completely confident. To thank those participating, U of S will enter their name into a random draw for a \$250 fuel card and will select one winner from every 100 completed surveys.

\*Please note the oat growers commissions are not conducting or reviewing this survey but are encouraging producers to participate.

<http://tinyurl.com/croprotationsurvey2016>

Questions can be directed to:

Stuart Smyth

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E-mail: [stuart.smyth@usask.ca](mailto:stuart.smyth@usask.ca)

## {UPCOMING} {AG EVENTS

**June 15 – 17**

***Canada's Farm Progress Show***  
**Regina, Saskatchewan**

**July 11 – 15**

***10th International Oat Conference***  
**St. Petersburg, Russia**  
**<http://oats2016.org/>**

**July 19**

***IHARF Crop Management field day***  
**Indian Head, Saskatchewan**

## Horse Healthy Oats

"My guys (horses) have done great on whole oats so I throw a handful of Strategy Healthy Choice in each feeding. Along with quality grass hay and free access to a mineral salt block and their coats look great and they have a brain and aren't crawling out of their skins."

"Been using crimped oats in my custom dry ration for over a decade. My Dean of Ag in undergrad was a livestock nutrition researcher. Always recommended them for working horses that had no metabolic issues."

These are but a few comments that POGA sees on an ongoing basis regarding the Horse Healthy Oats Project. Social media is very important to the communications strategy. Facebook posts and the horsehealthyoats.com website using Julie Goodnight, a sought-out trusted horse expert, are well utilized. She has featured oats as a preferred feed many times on television, in articles, on social media and in personal contact with fans at clinics and trade shows. Goodnight has a vast impact on the horse industry through her multi-media approach. Having equine experts communicate oats' role in a healthy horse throughout its life is simply not enough! That's why POGA continues to encourage and support oat research and marketing efforts in both human and animal consumption markets in North America. Equine research is important and continues. POGA is working with Dr. Lori Warren, University of Florida, who is addressing oat beta-glucans and immune system improvement in horses.

"If oat beta-glucan can enhance immune function or mediate stress-induced suppression of the immune system, it will greatly improve the value of oats as a main ingredient in equine feeds," says Warren. Beta-glucans are known in human nutrition for heart health benefits, but to-date haven't been studied in equine nutrition. This work is partially funding by the AgriInnovation Program under Growing Forward 2, a federal, provincial, territorial initiative.

"Oats: Improve the gastrointestinal Health of Horses," is the latest research project involving oats and the equine industry. This project, which is co-funded by Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF), is to be completed at Penn State University will help define the dietary role whole oats play as a promotor of equine gastrointestinal health, with particular attention to their inclusion level in the diet and the occurrence of ulcers, colitis and laminitis. Principal researcher Dr. Burt Staniar tells us "Oats represent a unique

combination of fiber and starch that we think may benefit the health of the horse's entire gastrointestinal tract. We are particularly interested in how dietary oats influence the risk of gastric ulcers and/or inflammation in other parts of the gastrointestinal tract. It's possible that the oat hull many horse owners see in their horse's manure has not been wasted, but was instead benefiting the horse during its gastrointestinal journey."

It is important for the oat industry to not only thoroughly understand their product but also to provide a scientific basis for using oats. Research may identify other oat nutritional benefits to horses and increase consumption in this important marketplace.

### Feed Oats vs. Pony Oats: What's the Difference?

According to Chris Newbergher, Stony Plain Seed Cleaning Plant, at the AOGC Annual General Meeting held on January 25, 2016 in Edmonton, feed and pony oat markets are very different. Whereas feed oats are almost any color, weight or moisture, pony oats must have good color, weight and specific moisture contents. The difference is certainly reflected in the price! Alberta feed oats prices in January 2016, ranged from \$2.25 - 2.95/bu; while pony oats prices were in the \$3.25 - 3.50/bu range. Feed oats are primarily used as feed ingredient for calves and non-competitive horses, while pony oats service a very selective customer base, in the high end race and competitive horse markets.

Globally, the pony oats market is fairly extensive with markets in Japan, China, Malaysia, Korea, Philippines, Singapore, and, of course, the United States.



Julie Goodnight

"Been feeding this (to my horse) for at least 15 years now. Rhee loves his oats."

## Growing and harvesting the T3/OAT database

The T3/OAT database (<https://triticeaetoolbox.org/oat/>), started January 2014, is a free public database for the global oat community. T3/OAT partners include USDA-ARS, the North American Millers Association, and AAFC. The database is part of a strategy in oat improvement called Oat Global (<http://www.oatglobal.org>). The Oat Global strategy team includes POGA and other international partners. Both initiatives arose from the realization that the global oat research community is small, there is a lot of commonality regarding challenges facing oat producers and processors, the cost of technology tools is substantial for any one player, and collaboration is critical for industry growth.

Nick Tinker, a research scientist at AAFC, is very involved in these efforts. His area of expertise is in informatics and applied genomics of oat. Tinker says "Oat is not a well behaved genome, it is very plastic, and every oat variety is slightly different. So I am pleased that we have finally developed and published a definitive oat map". With his colleagues, Tinker has developed a new high density oat consensus map based on the most common and consistent chromosome configurations within a sample of twenty oat parents. Tinker goes on to explain "while we can't yet sequence the whole oat genome, we have now sequenced a representative part of approximately 5000 different oat genomes to get a realistic picture of the diversity in oat". Among the benefits to oat breeders is that it is now economical to sequence the same representative part of any new oat breeding line, and to make informed decisions about what to cross or select in

any breeding program. Twelve public oat breeding programs in North America are now sharing data from their best breeding lines into the T3/OAT database. The value of this data will increase incrementally as researchers continue to add their data to the data base while using the current data.



Nick Tinker

Tinker's team has also begun to experiment with the many ancestors of oat, discovering which parts of the cultivated oat genome came from different wild oat species. The technology is such that we can now discover new versions of specific genes that exist only in wild oats. In the past, wild oat has been a source of genes for disease resistance. In future, Tinker expects that wild oat will help us improve many other traits in oat. When Dr. Tinker was asked if this research could be used to control wild oats in the future he responded with,

"We have sequenced part of the genome of several wild oat samples, and it is not impossible that there could be differences that would eventually lead to a method to control wild oats. However, I would not bet money on that." Therefore, POGA, and likely every oat grower reading this, are quietly optimistic that this could be a result!

Tinker is excited to continue his work, especially the cooperation and collaboration with oat breeders and researchers from around the world: growing the database and sharing it with like minded researchers; "collaboration makes oats strong and will always make oats strong."

## The Future of Oats

The Future of Oats is looking brighter as the oat industry came together on December 4, 2015 in Moose Jaw, SK to discuss a long term strategy. Discussions covered priorities in research, production, market development, and policy. The 62 attendees were well diversified and included representatives from the scientific/academic community, as well as millers, handlers, and other members of the value chain. The entire

board of the Prairie Oat Growers Association participated, as well as other farmer representatives, including a strong showing from Saskatchewan.

Common themes highlighted issues such as: Productivity, Market Development, and Nutrition and Health. Taking a whole value chain approach, the farmers, scientists, handlers, and millers in the room were able to integrate their vision for priorities

in the coming years, seeing POGA with a dual role to both foster production and create demand.

The highlights focus on four key areas: Developing oats, growing oats, consuming oats, and advocating for oats. The input will help POGA create a concise strategic 5-year plan that is measurable, and achievable.

This event was partially funded by the Industry Organization Development Fund.

## Selling Oats to Mexico

Mexico is the third largest importer of oats in the world and this trend will only increase as oats are increasingly being used as a breakfast food, in snacks and in fortified beverages in the country. Targetting this market, POGA joined the Mexican "healthy" momentum by launching a Spanish web site focused on promoting Canadian oats, in the Mexican market: Avenacanada.com.

The web site provides valuable information about Canadian oats in a friendly and appetizing way. Mexican visitors can find out all the nutritional properties of oats, and how to prepare them in delicious ways. Filled with customized oat recipes from Enchiladas to meatloaf and pancakes, it offers Mexican consumers ideas on how



Avena Homepage

to integrate oats in their daily diet, using local ingredients.

POGA's efforts have been extremely successful, evidenced by the fact that Mexican imports of Canadian oats are the highest they have been in 5 years. POGA is furthering this work through an online advertising campaign to promote the web site. In February this page had a total social reach of over 4 million and an average of 3,006 actions each day by Facebook users. In 2015, the

website Avenacanada.com had 1,163 Mexicans surfing the website each day.

In February 2015, POGA challenged Mexicans to create oat recipes. It was hugely successful with 64 recipes submitted by Mexican users in just one month. The contest doubled the social media engagement. The winning recipes were Oats Pizza Crust and Hotcakes with Coconut, Almonds and Honey. Other interesting creations included Sweet Potato Bread with Oats (in Mexico called camote), Breaded Shrimp with Coconut and Oats, Oats Ice Cream, Strawberry Oats Gelatin, Oats Quesadillas and many more.

As recognition for the benefits of oats builds in Mexico, POGA has been able to develop two new and exciting partnerships with the Mexican Diabetes Federation (FMD) and with the Mexican Ministry of Health. FMD will promote the health benefits of oats throughout their various and popular, social media channels including their website, Facebook fan page, magazines. They are already publishing healthy oat based recipes! Similarly, the Ministry of Health will publish promotional messages about oats and some POGA oats recipes in their digital cookbook. This work continues through funding by the AgriMarketing Program under Growing Forward 2, a federal, provincial, territorial initiative.

We have made extraordinary progress in the last two years since POGA first travelled to Mexico. and we are so excited to see what new and innovative ways we can get involved with the Mexican Market.

## Tropical Oats Granola

Recipe:

- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups of oats
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ground flaxseed
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped almonds
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dried coconut, diced or grated
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dry pineapple, mango or papaya
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup mashed banana
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil  
(can substitute another but coconut oil is sweeter)
- 1 pinch of salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla extract



Preheat oven to 180°C

Combine in a bowl the honey, mashed banana, milk, oil, salt and vanilla. In another stir the remaining ingredients. Combine both mixtures.

Take a baking sheet and cover with wax paper. Spread the granola all over. Bake for 10 minutes,

open the oven and stir the mixture so it gets evenly browned. Bake for another 10 minutes until golden.

Remove from oven and cool. Enjoy it with milk or yogurt or alone! Keep in a tightly closed container.

## Oats, Cheese & Spinach Croquettes

Recipe:

1 cup cooked spinach (fresh or frozen)

1/2 liter of milk

1/2 onion, finely chopped

150 gram of chopped cheese, manchego, goat or blue cheese.

4 heaping tablespoons of ground oats (or oatmeal)

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

2 tablespoons olive oil or butter

Salt and pepper

For the breading:

1/2 cup of milk or a lightly beaten egg

1/2 cup oatmeal

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Make sure the spinach is dry and to drain the excess of water, for this press the spinach in a strainer with a fork. This is very important otherwise the croquettes are going to crumble apart. Finely chop the spinach. In a skillet heat the oil or butter over medium heat and saute the onion until transparent, add the spinach and saute for two minutes. Stir in the oats and mix well. Gradually add the milk, one tablespoon at a time and stir with a wooden shovel, this is done to avoid lumps. When all the milk is incorporated, season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Cook for two minutes or until



mixture thickens. Cool completely. Add the diced cheese and mix.

Moisten your fingers with cold water to prevent sticking, form the croquettes with your hands. Place ground oats in a plate and the egg or milk in a bowl. Soak the croquettes one by one in the beaten egg or milk if you want to make the lighter version and then pass the croquettes onto the ground oats.

Place in a baking dish and sprinkle oil all over the croquettes. Bake until golden brown. You can also fry them with a little oil.



## Mycotoxin Update with the Canadian Grain Commission

The goal of this research undertaken by the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC), and co-funded with the Prairie Oat Growers Association through the Agriculture Development Fund, is to determine the occurrence of toxigenic fungi and associated mycotoxins in oats grown on the Canadian Prairies and evaluate the fate of fungi and mycotoxins during oat processing. In year two, CGC tells us that as in 2014, very little oats moved this past summer.



Grinding oat for mycotoxin analysis-Canadian Grain Commission

Forty-nine composite oat samples from a variety of companies, plus 120 samples submitted by producers to the Grain Research Laboratory's Harvest Sample Program from the 2015 harvest were collected and analyzed. Thanks to western Canadian oat growers who participated in the harvest collection program! Mycotoxins were analyzed and the median levels of mycotoxins were below the acceptable limit. Fusarium, mildew and other mould analyses revealed some geographic patterns of pathogen distribution. Fungal pathogens were more frequently detected in the eastern Prairies. Total fungal load was highest in samples collected in Manitoba, and lowest in parts of western Saskatchewan and Alberta. So it appears that year

and location are factors that govern the presence of toxigenic pathogens and subsequent mycotoxin production.

Results from the investigation into the effects of oat lipid content on grinding and dividing repeatability suggest that lipid content does not affect the particle size distribution produced, or the variability of the distribution, produced by the optimum sample processing procedure.

Of concern to producers and processors of Canadian oats is Ochratoxin A (OTA). It is not detectable to the eye, or grading, nor is it completely removable by processing.

OTA is produced in storage, not in the field, and almost all incidences of occurrence were found in samples that could have been stored (i.e. oat deliveries or rail car loadings) as opposed to harvest samples. It was also noted that the majority of OTA was in the smallest particle size fraction. This suggests that analysis of OTA is likely more sensitive to the methods of sample preparation, such as grinding, handling, and sub-sampling, and that loss of the small particles would alter the particle size distribution and produce biased samples for analysis.

Both project researchers, Tittlemier and Graefenhan, agree that outcomes of this project will allow oat producers, processors, and regulators to plan appropriate risk management strategies. Tittlemier



Identifying toxigenic plant pathogens-Canadian Grain Commission

er suggests "this research will also determine if oats produced in certain regions are more likely to be infected by toxigenic fungi and contain mycotoxins than others". "This information" adds Graefenhan, "will certainly help those oat producers in identified regions adapt their management strategies

to reduce the risk of mycotoxins, particularly OTA and maintain the quality the marketplace demands."

## SR & ED

The Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR & ED) program is a national program which provides tax-based incentives for research and development. Registered oat producers (those who have paid the levy and did not request a refund) are eligible for a tax credit, based on a percentage calculated on the dollar amount each provincial oat agency has invested in any research and development projects that meet the criteria of the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

For 2015 registered oat producers in their respective provinces may claim:

22.2% in Saskatchewan; 18.9% in Manitoba; and 16.5% in Alberta.

This information is also available at [www.poga.ca](http://www.poga.ca). Simply click on "Research Tax Credit" under the corresponding provincial commission at the bottom of the home page.

## ***Save the Date!*** **The Prairie Oat Growers Association 2016 Annual General Meeting is booked!**

Location: Lakeview Hecla Resort, Hecla, MB  
Date: December 1, 2016

Call 1-204-279-2041 now to book your room.  
*Ask for the Prairie Oat Growers Association group rate, which is a special negotiated room rate of \$100-110 per night (plus fees and taxes). The number of available rooms is limited so book now!*

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# Meet your Neighbors

## Willie Zuchkan

Willie Zuchkan, a long-time director of SODC and POGA, retired January 15, 2016. He was actually a founding member of POGA, in the early days before any of the three prairie oat agencies were formed. "Oats didn't have a voice, so members of Foam Lake, Keliher and Ituna marketing clubs met, and through paid memberships the Prairie Oat Growers Association was born" he said.

The Zuchkans operate a cow-calf enterprise in the Foam Lake area, where they sell breeding stock from their 600 cow herd and custom feed another 3500 head annually. They farm 6000 acres and rent pasture land growing oats, barley, corn and silage. Cattle have always been a part of this 5th generation farm that supports the families of Willie, his brother John and late brother Donnie.



Willie Zuchkan

The farm has received dual century farm family awards for both the Zuchkan and Stan families.

Willie's mom, Jean is still an active contributor to the farm operation providing goodies for the coffee room and catering for their farm's bred heifer sale, an annual event for the past 15 years.

Zuchkan is proud of the accomplishments of SODC and POGA, particularly the impact of their concentrated efforts to transport grain, as well as the development and expansion of the Mexican oat market, both very good for the oat industry. "There are lots of positives in the agriculture business; lots of upsides; it's a good lifestyle, and I see nothing but more positives ahead" said Zuchkan.

## Brad Boettger

Alberta's newest director, Brad Boettger, farms with his brother Jason and father Elwood about an hour south-east of Edmonton (near Tofield). Their 6000 acre grain operation utilizes a four year rotation of pulses (yellow, green peas), oats, oilseeds (canola or flax) and hard red spring wheat. Morgan, first introduced in 2010 is the predominant oat variety choice and is marketed to area millers. He would like to see

stronger color retention characteristics within Morgan but is satisfied with yield. Boettger said "they like growing oats because it is more mellow and gentler on the soil." He added, "oats is a healthy cereal and a healthy choice both for

end users and producers." The family firmly believes that a healthy soil provides healthy plants

which will resist a lot and require no, or much less, inputs like fungicides, so they are constantly striving towards building biology and life of the soil.

As to his becoming a director with AOGC and POGA, he's interested in seeing markets continue to expand here at home and abroad and encouraging more farmers to grow oats. He

wants to better understand the crop and then promote it as much as possible.

Brad and Lisa have two small children, Claire and Abby. They enjoy weekly outings with other young families and give time to helping others.



Brad Boettger and family

## Art Enns

Art Enns and Sons Ltd, is located near Morris, Manitoba. Enns jokes that the farm name was inherited from his father, also named Art, and that his two sons are currently off the farm, one involved in performance voice and the other involved in a master degree in computer languages leaving him to farm alone. The 2000 acre grain operation grows a variety of perennial grasses, wheat, oats, soybeans and canola. When asked why grow oats, Enns replied "oats have been a great fit in my rotation for years and lately it's the best money maker on my farm!" He likes to grow the newer varieties like Summit and Camden, as they have the newest disease packages, and for him stem rust resistance is vital. "The other key factor" he says, "both varieties are accepted as a milling oat, and that's where all my oats go." (Note: please check with your local elevator to determine preferred varieties as they do vary.)



Art Enns

Enns, the current POGA president, says "I enjoy agriculture, it's been good to me, and serving as a director is just one way of giving back to the agriculture industry." He is impressed with POGA, as it is a small industry organization with limited resources that has much impact on market development, varietal development and directing policy. "We are a strong voice, and we are being heard within the agriculture industry" says Enns, citing the transportation crisis several years ago and the growth of the Mexican oat market as two examples. He sees much opportunity for oats in global markets like China, India, and Mexico, (which is currently an organization focus). As oats continues to be recognized as safe and nutritionally beneficial, consumption will grow. "Oats need to increase in value. Farmers will continue to grow oats if it is priced competitively with other commodities," says Enns.

## Alberta, Bill 6 and the Alberta Oat Growers

Bill 6: Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act has been the major topic of discussion for oat grower directors, as well as farmers around Alberta and all of the farming regions of Western Canada. The Alberta Oat Growers Commission (AOGC) has been corresponding with the Government of Alberta since early December, prior to and after the legislation on December 10, 2015 (see <http://poga.ca/important-notice-requests>, for letters sent to the Government). Non-involvement of farm input and the very short time frame for the legislation were the primary concerns. The Commission did receive a response from the government, dated March 8, 2016, unfortunately it was too late and did not provide requested information. In December, members and staff of AOGC participated in a conference call with Minister O'Neil to hear about the government's planned round table process to formulate the details of Bill 6, again raising concerns about the lack of input of farmers. The Commission also participated with other crop commissions in the province to develop a farm survey designed to acquire feedback from Alberta farmers and ranchers and encouraged Alberta producers to complete the survey. On January 22, 2016 in Red Deer, AB representatives from crop and

livestock commissions came together for a facilitated workshop geared to create a unified farm voice to work with the Government on this bill.

At the Commission's annual general meeting, January 25, 2016 registered oat growers provided grassroots direction for Commission's future actions. Members present said they felt AOGC's position should be "no" to OH & S; request the Government "revisit WCB law and provide provisions for private insurance options"; and producers stated that AOGC should participate in the roundtable process the Government of Alberta is putting together regarding Bill 6 but be mindful of the dollars being spent.

Response time, governance and communication concerns with the AgCoalition prompted the Alberta Oat Growers Commission to remove itself from the AgCoalition. Moving forward, AOGC Director, Anthony Van Rootselaar, is letting his name stand for farmer participation in the round table process representing oats. The Commission continues to monitor the situation and work with others to present farm-friendly, practical solutions to Bill 6.

For more information on Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act from Government See <http://www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch.com>

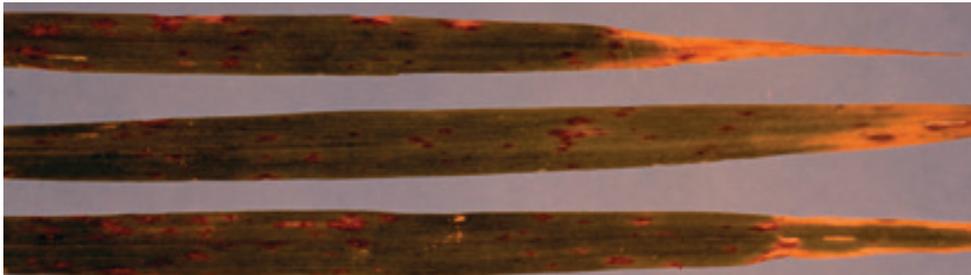
## Leaf Blotch

Leaf blotch has become more prevalent in recent years, but very little is known about the impact of this disease on oat production. Given the apparent susceptibility of some oat germplasm to these pathogens, concern



Stagnospora Avenae - Kutcher

exists as to the potential harm they may pose to oat yield and grain qual-



Pyrenophora Avenae - Western Committee on Plant Disease

ity (i.e. test weight), which can negatively impact milling quality and price. A research team comprised of Aaron Beattie, Randy Kutcher and Tajinder Grewal, from the Crop Development Centre, at the University of Saskatchewan are combining their skills and talents to look at developing screening techniques to evaluate and understand oat leaf blotch pathogens. They will be trying to understand the genetics of resistance in oats to leaf blotch and identify and develop molecular markers for leaf blotch resistance in oat breeding.

“What we do know, is that the two most prevalent blotch pathogens ‘Stagonospora avenae’ and ‘Pyrenophora avenae’ attack oats and can reduce yield, cause lodging, and re-

duce the quality of both milling oats and feed oats” says Grewal.

This project, supported by Prairie Oat Growers Association, Western Grains Research Foundation, and Agriculture Development Fund, will generate



Stagnospora Avenae - Kutcher

knowledge related to screening techniques, sources of resistance, genetics of resistance, and molecular markers associated with leaf blotch resistance. Grewal tells us that “all the results of this team’s work will be shared extensively with collaborating oat research and breeding programs”. “Western Canadian producers may well see commercial oat varieties with much better resistance to the disease” adds Beattie.

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