

## Presenters at the POGA and Commission AGMs

Spring issues of the Oat Scoop highlight presenters at the POGA and commission AGMs. Once again, the AGMs were a great success and speakers were well received. If POGA was granted permission to post the presentation overheads on our website, readers can use the links and information beneath each AGM listing to access the files. **NOTE: POGA attempts to capture and represent the information provided by each presenter. The views and opinions of presenters (and other newsletter subjects) may not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the POGA and/or oat commission boards.**

### Presentations at the POGA AGM (Dec 6/23 in Winnipeg):

Matt Booth, Author and Attitude Adjuster Extrordinaire: Discover how your outlook can help to create a positive life for yourself and those around you—see page 11.

Brianne McInnes, Operations Manager at Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation (NARF): Agronomic considerations for growing oats: side versus mid-row banding (SaskOats-administered ADOPT projects: 4R Management: Right rate and placement for fertilizer)—go to the link below for the overheads; a final report will be published in the June/24 issue).

Drew Lerner, World Weather Inc. (and 'Weather Know-It-All'): Insights on the factors that will/might affect the weather in western Canada—see page 14.

Damian Mason, Podcaster and Ag Promoter: Mason's collection of information, opinions and a list of factors (he called them 'Ations') that affect the Ag industry—see page 5.

Drs. Sijo Joseph and Thomas Netticadan (AAFC): Findings from the POGA-supported project: *Beyond Beta (β)-glucan: Demonstrating health benefits of oat protein* and other related projects—see page 10.

To read POGA AGM presentation overheads, go to: <https://poga.ca> and choose AGM and Conference from the drop-down under the 'About POGA' tab.

### Presentations at the SaskOats AGM (Jan 10/24 in Saskatoon):

Brett Casavant, C-Merak Industries CEO: New opportunities in oat food and beverages. Use the POGA link below to read the presentation.

Murad Al-Katib, AGT Foods President and CEO: The history of AGT, current work (including what is happening at the new oat processing plant), and future plans for the company (including expanding oat processing capacity)—see page 7.

To read SaskOats presentation overheads, go to: <https://poga.ca> and choose SaskOats AGM and Conference from the drop-down under the Provincial Commissions tab.

### Presentations made at AOGC AGM (Jan 22/24 in Edmonton):

Dr. Linda Gorim, University of Alberta: Gorim's project *Liming for Crop Production and Soil Health*—see page 6.

Jim Dyck, Oat Advantage (OA): A summary of OA's oat breeding presentation—see page 15.

Tracy Bush, Sales Manager, MGM Seed and Grain/Bay State Milling: The oat market from a specialty grain buyer's perspective—see page 8.

To read AOGC presentations, go to: <https://poga.ca> and choose AOGC AGM and Conference from the drop-down under the Provincial Commissions tab.

### Presentation made at MOGA AGM (Feb 14/24 in Edmonton):

Donalee Jones, Great Tastes of Manitoba (GTOM): Accomplishments and their promotion of oats and other farm products—see page 13. To read her presentation, go to: <https://poga.ca>, choose MOGA AGM and Conference from the drop-down under the Provincial Commissions tab.

### Oat Market Outlook (POGA and SaskOats AGMs):

Combined Oat Market Outlook: Information from two experts in one, comparative article. Presenters were: Randy Strychar, Oatinformation.com (POGA AGM); and, Chuck Penner, LeftField Commodity Research (SaskOats AGM)—see page 2.

## Save the Date!

### 2024 POGA AGM

Block your calendar now for the 2024 POGA AGM. This is an event you won't want to miss if you grow oats or are interested in the oat industry and market. The event will kick off with a Tuesday evening reception (Dec 3) and is followed (on Dec 4) with an all-day speaking event and networking opportunities for growers and industry representatives.

The AGM will be held the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, AB. Book your room early by phoning 1-833-762-6866 or via the online booking link: <https://book.passkey.com/go/POGA2024>

Be sure to mention POGA AGM to secure the negotiated rate of \$199 (plus fees) per night (the room block closes Nov 13/24). POGA has sold out of their hotel room block at the Banff Springs every year the AGM has been held there. If you are planning to attend, book early so you don't miss out!

The agenda will be available in early summer, so keep checking the Events page at <https://poga.ca/> and upcoming issues of The Oat Scoop.

# Announcing the First Levy Increase for All Three Prairie Oat Commissions Since the Levies Came into Force

## Provincial Oat Commissions/Associations Received Producer Approval at the AGMS

A motion was brought forward and carried at each commission's 2024 AGM and received a combined approval from over 95% of voting producers:

- *AOCG Motion: To increase the Alberta Oat Growers Commission (AOGC) levy from \$0.50 per tonne to \$0.75 per tonne effective August 1, 2024.*
- *MOGA Motion: To increase the Manitoba Oat Growers Association (MOGA) service charge/levy from \$0.50 per tonne to \$0.75 per tonne effective August 1, 2024, or later (when the regulation comes into force).*
- *SaskOats Motion: To increase the Saskatchewan Oat Development Commission (SaskOats) levy from \$0.50 per tonne to \$0.75 per tonne effective August 1, 2024.*

The commission boards thank all participants for their input and support to approve the motions that will enable POGA and the commissions to continue to further the oat industry's interests.

## Two Experts Presented the Oat Market Outlook 🍷

In this article, POGA is providing the Oat Market Outlook presentations from both the POGA and SaskOats AGM, as producers are always keen to hear forecasts and information from the experts.

**Randy Strychar,**  
**Oatinformation.com** (Dec 6/23  
POGA AGM)

Strychar first presented his main summary points:

- Global oat and oat product trade slowed (exports to North America are declining, but to offshore are increasing). Inflation and instability is affecting global trade.
- Global oat supplies are (at AGM presentation time) on pace for near-record lows.
- Canadian oat 2023/24 ending stocks are on pace for near-record lows (Strychar estimates 420KMT).
- Lower trending wheat, corn and barley values are keeping a lid on oat prices. The US millers pre-bought a large volume of oat supplies, which has bought them some time before they need to replenish their stock.
- Due to annual, seeded-oat-acre volatility, a large increase in 2024 Canadian oat acres is expected (and needed)—there is no oat supply cushion this year, like we saw in 2022/23. Strychar predicts an increase of ~30%.

Millers are expecting a high volume of seeded oat acres in 2024/25 and because many pre-bought a 3-4 month supply at the end of 2023, they will be cautious to pay higher prices for 2023/24 oats. However, he advised that growers will have some control (up to 2024 summer).

Strychar cautioned, "Right now, the current oat price spread compared to other cereals is encouraging growers to hold onto oats. Wheat, corn and barley prices are lagging and this will also cap oat price gains. Growers need to realize that the holding strategy has a time expiration, as 2024/25 oat supply increases are expected to be high (or higher)."

For Manitoba oat price predictions: keeping in mind that previous year crop prices seasonally trend higher into January before falling at current year harvest, Strychar

believes \$5.50-6.00 is as high as prices may go, but if other previously mentioned factors influence the market, they could peak at \$3.50-4.00. New crop prices may bring prices up a bit, but if seeded acres are high, they will probably go lower.

The North American supply chain is shifting from emphasis on exports of raw oat to milling of Canadian oat-product, and this trend will continue. The milling industry is growing in North America (by 2030, a 16% increase is expected) and is the driver of Canadian oat markets. Canada still exports mostly to the U.S. Exports to Chile have been increasing (Chile is known for its milling capacity and exports a lot of product). Strychar

states, "More oat production will be required to meet demand from increased North American milling capacity and exports of oat stock and oat-food product." Currently, export numbers will be adversely affected by the low oat stocks.

The 'good news' for oat growers:

- Oats have become a food commodity with growing consumer demand and the development of oat-food products and the gluten-free market.
- Consumers are increasingly aware of the health-related potential in oats.
- There are more oat foods and beverages on the shelves, and this visibility incentivizes consumers to purchase.
- Overall, the North American oat market is poised for continued growth.

The 'bad news':

- Inflation is affecting consumer purchasing.
- The current pricing model (which values oats as a feed grain) is outdated and impedes supply stabilization, leads to large price swings for growers and the oat industry, and dissuades producers from growing oats consistently. Most millers agree and Strychar believes this will be addressed sooner than later. Direct contracting and price transparency are two factors to be included while rebuilding the pricing model.
- Oats do not receive enough funding for research and development.
- Trade barriers exist.





To read the overheads from the presentation, go to: <https://poga.ca/about-poga/poga-agm-and-conference/>. For more information about Strychar’s company, go to: <https://www.Oatinformation.com/>

**Chuck Penner, LeftField Commodity Research** (Jan 10/24 SaskOats AGM)

Seeded acres dropped sharply from the 2022/23 high (currently, a 50% decline since then). 2023/24 production estimates (POGA note: *this information was as of the AGM time and based on the seeded area estimate, not harvested area*): 2.6MT (StatsCan) versus 1.9MT (insured acres). Penner explained, “It’s very difficult to know which of these is correct. Reality may be somewhere in between the two. Insured oat acres in all three provinces were lower than StatsCan numbers.”

2023/24 oat supply: 3.9MT (StatsCan) versus 3.2MT (crop insurance (Penner stated this is probably too low)). The 2022/23 supply number (~5.6MT) explains the current drop in oat prices. Penner reminded the audience that the drought probably changed growers’ expectations of a ‘good oat price’. Prices dropped back to an average range, but the swing probably caused producers to feel like it dropped ‘too much’.

Commercial oat processors, holding terminals, etc., went into 2023/24 with massive inventories and didn’t need to bid aggressively; now, inventory levels are back to average. Overall, oat supplies will be tight, but millers will still be cautious buyers.

Exports for oat food, seed, grain and products are on track for 2023/24 (the only major decrease is for oat feed, and this is because barley is much cheaper right now). Penner explained, “Licensed oat exports indicate they may be starting to pick up. Elevator shipments of oats indicate more movement to Pacific terminals (likely to South America/Mexico).”

He continued, “Month-to-month export volatility is a bit of an issue right now (steadily declining since Aug/23 and well below average for Oct and Nov). POGA’s work to increase exports to Peru and Chile is paying off, and will be especially important if Trump is elected in late 2024 and the U.S. introduces his proposed 10% tariff.”

Canadian farmer oat deliveries are beginning to pick up, so there are less oats on farms now.

2022/23 ending stocks were 1.2MT. It appears that 2023/24 will be in a low ending stock position at .42MT (from 2021/22 to 2023/24, oat stocks have been ‘famine’ to ‘feast’ to ‘famine’ - even with limited exports). POGA note: *Shawna Mathieson, POGA Executive Director, described this as the ‘oat price wave’ during the SaskOats AGM. She stated, “Profitable, competitive prices need to stabilize to incentivize farmers to keep oats in the rotation.”*

U.S. oat supply numbers (carry-in, production and imports) indicate they can’t afford to reduce their imports and will need to catch up (the U.S. is Canada’s biggest oat customer). Australian 2023/24 oat production indicates they won’t have supplies to compete in all the markets (Canada and Australia ‘trade’ export rankings to the Mexican market).

Canadian oats are cheaper than U.S. oats (which are competing for corn and soybean acres); this is good for Canadian oat exports. Barley prices are down right now, so

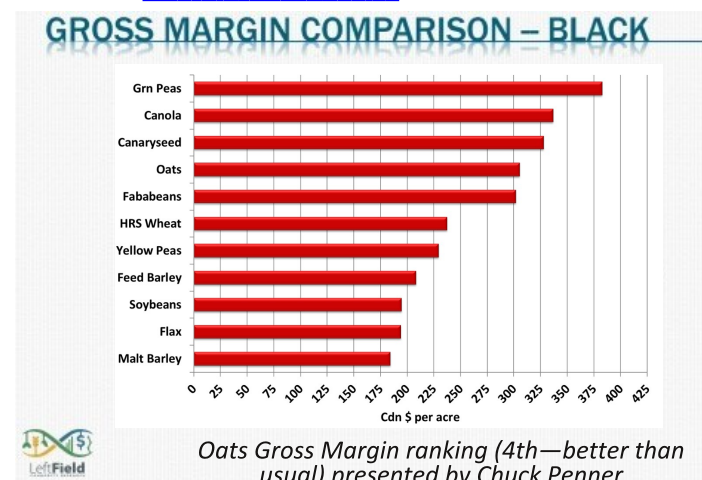
there is less incentive to feed oats.

Regarding average prairie oat bids—new crop bids have been on par with spot bids (since Jul/22). This indicates there may already be concerns about future oat supplies. Penner stated, “We feel that the high for old crop Manitoba oats could hit around \$6.00, and closer to \$5.50 for Saskatchewan—but that will depend on increased milling demand.”

Penner also spoke of oat’s overlooked success story: “Oat milling has been steadily growing, but has not been receiving the same amount of recognition as other processing growth, such as canola crush plants or pea protein facilities. This growth has more than doubled oat product exports in the last 20 years.”

To read the presentation, go to: <https://poga.ca/provincial-commissions/saskatchewan-oat-development-commission-saskoats/saskatchewan-oat-development-commission-agm-and-conference/> For more information about LeftField, go to: <https://www.leftfieldcr.com/>

*POGA note: Our Executive Director also completes an oat acreage forecast each year, driven by the information provided by ~30 farmers across Western Canada (planned planted acres this year vs. actual acres last year). Based on this information, POGA is forecasting lower 2024 planted oat acres than StatsCan or Randy Strychar predict. It is possible, however, that farmers may change their planting decisions between now and seeding, considering Chuck Penner’s Gross Margin Comparison of oats vs. other crops, which indicated oats ranked in 4th place as of the SaskOats AGM. If you are interested in providing your intended acres to POGA to make a more accurate forecast please e-mail Shawna at [smathieson@poga.ca](mailto:smathieson@poga.ca).*



## Your POGA Board At Work

Jenneth Johanson (Past POGA President) and Dylan Robinson (POGA Vice President) attended a Prairie Grain Development Committee meeting on Feb 28-29 in Saskatoon. The meeting’s purpose was to vote on new oat varieties (based on agronomic and quality profiles) to be put forward for distribution by seed companies. In total, five varieties were approved either for closed-loop registration or full registration.

## POGA Partners with Northern Communities to Share the Goodness of Oats

Early in 2023, POGA contacted The Municipal District of Spirit River No. 133 to ask if they were interested in a partnered, promotional project to encourage people to embrace the health benefits, affordability and convenience of oats. The MD enthusiastically agreed and contacted the Peace Region Economic Development Alliance (PREDA) to ask if they were interested in becoming involved to extend the project's reach. PREDA was happy to join in and the organizations made plans for an oat-giveaway to PREDA-member ratepayers, representing 30 MDs (and included counties, towns and villages).

A shipment of 2kg bags of oatmeal (produced and packaged by Grains Millers and Save-On-Foods) was delivered to the Peace Region in September.

All MDs installed display stands (with posters, and the oat packages and recipe cards to be distributed to ratepayers visiting the administration offices (see page 12 of this issue)). Some municipalities also set up stands at farmers markets and community events. Other examples of cooperative, innovative outreach were:

- The Town of Grimshaw partnered with Agricultural Financial Services Corporation and installed a booth at the Harvest Moon Festival.
- Northern Lakes College had a booth set up at the Peace River campus.
- The MD of Fairview and Town of Sexsmith provided some oat bags to their local schools.

There were several boxes remaining after the MDs received what they needed, and these were given to the Central Peace Regional Family and Community Support Services. The agency distributed packages through their Seniors' Christmas Hamper program.

Dan Dibbelt, MD Spirit River CAO and PREDA Executive Director, shared, "Through the process, the municipalities greatly enjoyed giving out the oats; many told us they received feedback from ratepayers who couldn't believe they were free. The meatloaf recipe was a hit (see page 12 for the fish coating recipe and the 2023 November issue for the meatloaf recipe). A few people commented on the simplicity of preparation, and many noted the quality of the oats."

Municipal staff gained some insight when handing out the oats. Dibbelt stated, "Some learned that not all urban dwellers are aware of oat production in the Peace region (and in fact, are surprised to learn where their food comes from). Distribution was simple and was a positive experience for both staff and ratepayers."

Dibbelt concluded, "It was fun, generated a lot of excitement in the Peace region, and had a positive impact. From a personal perspective, I now make oats a part my daily routine (usually my afternoon snack—instead of a donut or something similar). I always put a drop of vanilla in my cup of oats!"

The project's story was picked up by several news outlets, such as Central Peace Signal printed news and <https://www.southpeaceneeds.com/want-some-healthy-eating-try-oats/>.



*The shipment arrives in the Peace Region. From left to right: Anthony Van Rootselaar (POGA director and MD of Spirit River Reeve), Carolyn Kolebaba (PREDA Chair), Nick Van Rootselaar (MD of Spirit River Deputy Reeve)*



*PREDA Executive, with oats for participating MDs at the 2023 September meeting. From left to right: Wendy Wald (Grimshaw Mayor), Carolyn Kolebaba (PREDA Chair), Sandra Eastman (MD of Peace Deputy Reeve), Hector Perez (Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency)*

## Shawna Mathieson, Your Executive Director, at Work

In collaboration with some key industry partners, worked with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Market Access Secretariat and provided information related to oats tariff and non-tariff barriers in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—Canada Free Trade Agreement, and what would need to be implemented for positive changes in those oat markets.



## The 'Ations' Impacting Agriculture ✍️

### 2023 December POGA AGM Presentation

Damian Mason, Podcaster and Ag Promoter, delivered a dynamic presentation: *Exploring topics with respect to the people who make a living in the agriculture industry.* The talk included a list of 'Ations' affecting the industry, which are: Innovation, Population, Automation, Regulation, Consolidation, Confrontation, Mechanization, Immigration, and Globalization/De-globalization. A few of these are addressed in this article.



*Damian Mason: the 'Ations' of Ag*

The business of agriculture is evolving quickly and Mason believes that the innovations we will see in the near future will be greater than the sum total of all changes that have come before. Scarcity ruled until ~9,000 years ago when humans began cultivating crops and raising livestock. Practices remained fairly static until 100 years ago, when the invention of tractors changed everything. Then yields continued to increase due to, for example, hybridization, mechanization and specialization of labour.

Some say the greatest advancements in the future will be technological, such as autonomous vehicles. Machinery will become smaller because we now know the harm compaction does to soil. Equipment may not be owned by the farmer, as this may not be seen as a good use of capital. Drone technology will become popular; battery-operated equipment will work 24 hours/day.

Mason warned, "The mindset in modern agricultural countries must change! Food production capability is fine now; the problem is waste (35% globally) and this leads to food insecurity. Waste is caused by problems in distribution, economics and politics. Another factor of concern is 'the environment' (and we should not confuse this with the 'environmental cause' as defined by the 'elitists'). If we are worried about not having enough food, why is the U.S. burning up to 40% of their corn in the form of ethanol? In spite of this practice, other countries are growing more corn than ever before."

Society has been influenced by visions of a dystopian future (e.g., in movies and social media). He explained, "We have been conditioned to believe that lack of food and starvation are 'real things' but they are not; we are more than capable of producing enough food to feed the future population."

Due to current decreasing fertility rates, the population will decline in the future (not continue to increase, as is being predicted), and there will be less mouths to feed in 10-50 years. The population is aging and more seniors are working now than ever before. Median ages in the U.S. (and Canada) have increased ~11 years over the last 50 years. He asked: "What do you think that will do to food consumption patterns?"

The biggest hurdle will be regulation. Mason asserted, "Environmental activist interests versus agriculture is driving this right now. Environmentalism is the new, devout religion fostered by groups like the United Nations, which has become an activist group and needs a cause to stay alive. The U.N. wants to influence regulation that will control energy and food production. Public fear of scarcity creates power and profit for these non-governmental groups. Affordable and abundant energy and food create a thriving middle class, and this is not in their interest."

In the Netherlands, farmers are accepting under-valued farm buy-outs due to yet another threat—this time methane regulation (previously, carbon and nitrates were the targets). This will make livestock unaffordable for most and affect oats used for livestock feed. New Zealand is also proposing taxes on both beef- and dairy-related methane production. Fake meat producers may believe they will benefit and are in support of this. "The good news is, consumers have been rejecting fake and plant-based meat. Even during COVID, when shelves were emptied of almost all food products, fake meat product remained unpurchased," declared Mason.

Insofar as 'Confront-Ation' is concerned, Mason asked people to reconsider encouraging more export business with China. Canada's largest customer is the U.S. China only became a customer 10-15 years ago. He stated, "North America's (N.A.) relationship with China is already deteriorating and I predict it will only get worse. I'm not worried, though. Canada and Mexico are alternating #1 and #2 customers of the U.S. We need to double down with countries we want to do business with (and vice versa) and we'll be fine. Currently, China is extracting third-world countries' resources because they know they're at odds with the U.S. We simply have to build better cooperation between N.A. countries."

What does Mason believe is in oat growers' future? Producers will use less harsh chemistry/synthetic fertilizer and more cover crops. More legislation will govern the industry (e.g., if you want crop insurance you will have to use cover crops, reduce tillage, etc.). In certain N.A. regions, there will be water wars. Water hasn't been valued before; it will be in the future and will begin to affect land values and crop rotation systems, especially in western states and certain parts of western provinces where water is scarce. Once water economics takes certain crops out of play, supply management will change.

Mason closed by stating: "We've concentrated on productivity and efficiency to get to this point of huge Ag supplies— even surpluses. Moving forward we need to think more about maximizing returns and margins because the old days of simply 'produce more crops and we'll find a market to sell it' are likely going away."

Mason produced The Business of Agriculture podcast, which is released as both audio and video. After his AGM presentation, Damian recorded an episode with POGA/MOGA director-elect John Bergen and oat producer Riley Anderson. You can find it (and more than 300 other episodes) at: <https://thebusinessofagriculture.libsyn.com/323-all-about-oats-with-2-canadian-producers> or <https://youtu.be/kOE0ygdqND0?si=SYavQ1PhHcZIJG1E>. POGA also posted the episode to their website <https://poga.ca/> under the Communication and Advocacy tab: Latest News. *POGA NOTE: The views and opinions expressed by presenters do not necessarily reflect those of the POGA board.*

## The Effects of Lime on Soil pH

### 2024 January AOGC AGM Presentation

Dr. Linda Gorim (University of Alberta Assistant Professor & WGRF Chair in Cropping Systems, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science - Ag, Food & Nutrition Science Department) led the Alberta-based project *Liming for crop production and soil health*.

She and her Postdoc, Dr. Rebecca Enesi, attended the AOGC AGM to present preliminary findings from Year 2023 of the 2022-24 project.

The soil in much of Alberta and parts of Saskatchewan has been reported to have pH levels below 6.0 (readings of <5.5 are considered acidic). Many factors are known to influence soil pH and levels can fluctuate.

Dr. Enesi explained, "The most current liming research was done 40 years ago. The practice of liming is not widespread due to its high cost, and lack of information on application timing/frequency and appropriate sources and its effect on crop productivity and soil health." The team is focused on using readily-available lime within each study's geographic location.

Soil health study objectives are to:

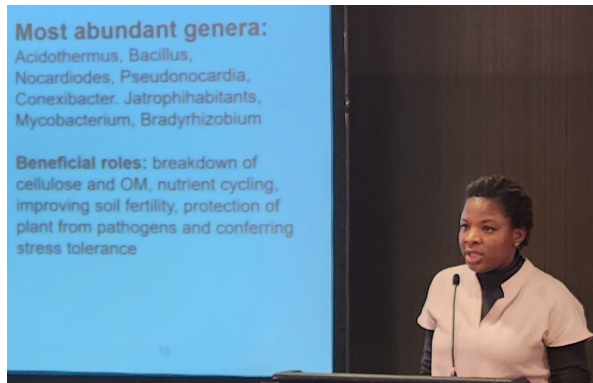
- measure any shift in soil microbial community structure and function over time in lime versus no-

lime treatments; and

- evaluate the effect of liming on selected soil health parameters.

Agronomic objectives are to evaluate:

- the effect of liming on agronomic parameters and crop yields across different on-farm field sites;
- the effect of different lime sources on agronomic parameters and crop yields; and
- the profitability of lime application.



*Dr. Rebecca Enesi: Soil pH is regarded as one of the most informative measurement of soil characteristics, as it affects nutrient availability, plant growth and microbial activity*

The study includes the use of geospatial technology and soil optix sensors to measure pH (in various central-Alberta field locations) to determine how pH effects various soil and agronomic factors at the landscape level.

Some preliminary agronomic results indicate that liming did not increase yields of canola and barley. With increasing soil pH due to lime treatment in oats: yield decreased; plant height decreased; and chlorophyll content increased.

Geospatial analysis determined that soil pH differed significantly within and between fields (i.e., variable rate lime application is recommended). Canola and oat yield varied spatially across all fields (in one field, oat yield varied from 2000-8000 kg/ha).

For more information on all the results, preliminary conclusions, and current/future work, go to Dr. Gorim's presentation at <https://poga.ca/>, and under the Provincial Commissions tab, choose AOGC—AGM and conference.

This project was funded by Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR), Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF), Mitacs Accelerate, Norstar Industries, and SoilOptix.



## Board at Work

AOGC is supporting a 15 member Stakeholder Working Group which was established to address the shortage of agronomists and extension specialists and to develop a plan for a more cohesive and collaborative approach for extension support. The Group is receiving facilitation support from Agricultural Research and Extension Counsel of Alberta (ARECA).

The Working Group has met several times over the past two months, continues to engage other groups across the agricultural sector affected by this issue (such as AOGC), and is working on securing new funding for a pilot project to start later this year. Members of the Working Group include agriculture-based Commissions, Forage and Applied Research Associations, Municipal Agricultural Service Boards, colleges and universities, Ag Canada, ag-related businesses, Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR), and Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation.

**Would you like to follow POGA on X/Twitter?**

Then here's our handle!

@Oat Growers

## Producer Consent Form

POGA has received requests from international oat buyers to source oats directly from producers. If you are an oat producer in Alberta, Manitoba or Saskatchewan and are interested in being contacted by these companies for potential direct oat sales, head over to the main page at <https://poga.ca/>, click on and fill out the Producer Consent Form. Your contact info will be included in a list provided to companies inquiring about direct-from-producer sales.



## Oat Processing Expansion at AGT Foods ✍ 2024 January SaskOats AGM Presentation



*Murad Al-Katib: Speaking about the 'power of blending' pulses and oats into food products with a complete-protein profile*

Due to the popularity of his presentation at the 2022 December POGA AGM, Murad Al-Katib, President and CEO of AGT Foods and Ingredients Inc., was invited to speak to oat growers again this year at the SaskOats AGM.

In 2023, AGT Foods expanded its processing plant in Aberdeen, SK to include oat processing capabilities. The plant has been an early success and has already processed and sold out its entire oat inventory. The company is now talking about doubling the capacity at the plant. It's an exciting time to be involved in oats!

According to Al-Katib, oats have been condemned to a "commodity ghetto" for too long; instead, they should now be considered a food grain connected to food product development and retail sales. He stated, "We need to focus on innovation for oats. It is now far more than just a breakfast cereal and livestock feed. Oats' increasing value to the entire industry should be reflected in the price the grower receives for their product!"

AGT was founded in 2001 as a lentil processor and exporter, but has expanded its portfolio to produce most pulses, grains and specialty crops as well as producing food ingredients and packaged foods made from those crops. The company is now finding ways to blend the goodness of both pulses and oats to create complete-protein products that consumers want. Al-Katib emphasized, "We are not moving a commodity. We are supplying food products to a global, middle-class population who are seeking quality, convenient and healthy foods."

Al-Katib also wants to see oat growers embrace pulses (such as lentils) for their nitrogen-fixing properties and ability to combine well with other food ingredients, like oats. He is committed to the "power of blending" cereals and pulses, and oats are a natural choice for AGT to maintain gluten-free, high-protein qualities in their products.

"The environment and sustainable agriculture are important to consumers. We already have a sustainability profile right here! We have the data and analytics to prove it. Now, we need to work to make sure producers are recognized and paid for it," said Al-Katib.

AGT continues to buoy its reputation as a leader in sustainability through its latest venture: a plant-based fertilizer made at its production facility in Rosetown, SK. The company has partnered with Vancouver-based venture Lucent BioSciences to develop a product called *Soileos Bioactive Crop Nutrition*. Cellulose (from by-products like oat hulls and pulse fibre) is used to create a bioactive blend that binds micronutrients into a fertilizer product. Soileos blends well with other dry fertilizers and ensures consistent bioavailability of micronutrients to plants and the soil. As explained on <https://soileos.com/how-it-works/>, the soil's natural biological activity works to release nutrients bound into the cellulose to fertilize the crops as required.

Companies such as AGT and Lucent Bio through their joint venture AGT Soileos, are creating products that monetize what once was considered 'by-product waste', making cereals and grains even more valuable. More research is being done on oat hulls and other ag by-products to discover other ways to utilize them, which will create more value for producers and assist the government to meet its sustainability (and potentially export) goals. "Dehulling also increases the value of oats themselves. Once the oat hull is removed, the bulk density of kilned and dried oat groats results in freight savings, and also increases shelf life of the product by up to 75%," shares Al-Katib. He also stated that one of AGT's goals is to be able to pay producers more for oats and make more money themselves; a win-win situation!

For more information on AGT Foods, visit: [www.agtfoods.com](http://www.agtfoods.com). For another example of innovation within the oats industry and the use of ag by-products once considered waste, Paterson's O Foods mill 'set a goal to use 100% renewable fuels, including the use of oat hulls to fuel high-pressure steam boilers for use in heating and processing'. (Please go to <https://poga.ca/communication-advocacy/oat-scoop-newsletter/> and choose the 2022 March Oat Scoop issue to read the page 15 article on the O Foods presentation at the 2022 February MOGA AGM.)



## The Market from a Specialty Oat Buyer's Perspective

### 2024 January AOGC AGM Presentation

POGA and SaskOats each had Oat Market Outlook reports at their AGMs (see pages 2 and 3 for an article on the presentations made by Randy Strychar and Chuck Penner). Tracy Bush (Sales Manager, MGM Seed and Grain/Bay State Milling) was invited to present at the AOGC AGM. While her presentation also included information on the general, current oat market (and, provided much the same information as the other two), she also provided a unique viewpoint on the oat market as it relates to the perspective of a Sales Manager/Buyer for specialty products. Here are some points she made for producers to consider about selling oats to those seeking specialty, organic and/or gluten-free oats for exclusive food product markets.

Currently, inflation is capping milling use. The North American market is not really moving right now; buyers are sitting on pre-purchases and have a bit of time. Millers are expecting large planted oat acres in 2024. The market is good at dealing with short supplies (e.g., import from Chile, etc.).

Bush stated, "The export volume is not expected to hold. Markets come and go, and so much affects the export market. The oat industry's best market is North America—it's good to investigate others, but focus on North America; you can build the best relationships here."

Producers, buyers, food processors and grocers all need to "get on the same page" regarding fluctuating oat prices.

Regarding proposed changes for the Oat-Pricing Model, as mentioned in the Oat Market Outlook article, Bush said that MGM agrees and is already working to educate its customers. At first, end users were pushing back, but they are beginning to accept that a new, transparent pricing model would benefit everyone in the chain.

Regarding the proposed 10% tariff that Trump announced he would initiate if elected (also, see Chuck Penner's mention of this topic on page 3), Bush provided a caveat that she could be wrong, but doesn't think this will happen, as the U.S. is dependent upon Canadian growers and millers.

Bush provided her forecast for oat prices: current bids are ~\$5/B for conventional and \$10/B for organic. New crop prices will be consistent to today's low carry-out stock prices (she hadn't yet seen new crop prices come out at the AGM time). Premiums will be offered for Gluten Free oats. Glyphosate-free is now a prerequisite for the food processors (and there will not be a premium placed on this).

She advised that producers should choose wisely who they do business with—the price offered may not be the only important factor: consider which company will consistently treat you well, offer payment terms that suit you, and continually invest in facility and operating improvements. Miller competition has increased in the past years, and this is to the growers' advantage. However, don't be too 'bullish' because grocery chains are pressuring manufacturers to lower prices (i.e., they are still treating oats as a commodity rather than a specialty ingredient). Food manufacturers can only lock in prices annually with grocery chains and their profits also fluctuate as a result.

Oats are not a food crop or livestock feed, and should now be considered a specialty ingredient. The end users need to be educated on this in order to keep planted acres more consistent. MGM is working to explain this to their own customers.

Bush advised growers to 'tell their story'. Some of the main talking points Bush believes are on-trend right now:

- producers are already meeting the sustainability standards that end users are demanding;
- oat are ready-to-eat, and considered high-protein and/or a super-food (this includes potential for naked varieties);
- oats can be marketed as a rice (savory) substitute;
- biomass 'green' energy is being produced from oat hulls;
- traceability (consumers want to know the growers, to 'connect the end to the beginning'; she says technology makes this easy); and
- Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC).

Bush provided information for producers interested in selling to the gluten-free market: crops containing gluten cannot be grown in the field in the prior three years; field inspections for 'pure seed' will be conducted; 4 kg samples are to be sent in at harvest; and, barley is the biggest contaminant.

Overall, Bush feels the oat market continues to offer good opportunities for growth. For more information about MGM Seed and Grain/Bay State Milling, go to:

<https://www.mgmseedandgrain.com/>

## Your POGA Board at Work

- Brad Boettger, POGA President, was interviewed by the Western Producer in late February to discuss the Environmental Working Group's article on Chlormequat and POGA's response and position.
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- Jenneth Johanson (Past President), Dylan Robinson (Vice-President) and Shawna Mathieson met with Grain Millers on Feb 29 to discuss their position on Chlormequat and the statement they provided to growers on Feb 28.



## Shawna Mathieson, Your Executive Director, At Work

- Attended meetings on Oct 17/23 in Saskatoon with Alastair McFadden, Assistant Deputy Minister for Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan). PrairiesCan is the federal department that diversifies the economy across the Canadian Prairies. The meeting was organized by SaskCrops.
- Attended a consultation session on Oct 18/23 with Transport Canada (as part of the federal government's Rail Policy Review). The review included rail policies and regulations that are of interest to grain producers and shippers, including interswitching, Canadian Transportation Agency powers, and the Maximum Revenue Entitlement (MRE). Oats were frequently discussed, including as it relates to extended interswitching and the large amount of producer cars used by oat growers.



## Board At Work

SaskOats sent a representative to attend the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association AGM on Feb 13-14 in Saskatoon.



## Board At Work

**SaskOats board is taking every opportunity to meet and connect with The Honourable David Marit, Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture.**

- SaskOats met with Minister Marit on Nov 14/23 in Regina. Discussion topics included federal policies on research/other funding; fertilizer emissions reduction targets; Saskatchewan First Act; updates on the oat industry; business risk management programs; marketing project funding; and, expectations for the 2024-25 budget.



*SaskOats at the Nov 14/23 meeting with Minister Marit. From left to right: director David Katerynych; Vice-Chair Landon Kuschak; Chair Ambrely Ralph; Minister Marit; Executive Director Shawna Mathieson; Audit Chair Elwood White; and director Jessica Slowski*

- Shawna Mathieson participated in a Dec 20/23 phone call meeting with Minister Marit and other ag commissions to discuss the Viterra-Bunge merger
- Minister Marit provided greetings and opening remarks during the SaskOats AGM on Jan 10/24.



*SaskOats at the Jan 10 AGM with Minister Marit. From left to right: director David Katerynych; Chair Ambrely Ralph; Executive Director Shawna Mathieson; Minister Marit; directors Chris Rundel and Jessica Slowski; Audit Chair Elwood White; and director Ryan Zuchkan*

## Researching the Health Benefits of Oat Protein

### 2023 December POGA AGM Presentation

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Drs. Sijo Joseph, Research Scientist, and Thomas Netticadan, Research Team Leader, are entering new territory to determine health-related benefits specifically related to oat protein.

Dr. Joseph presented data collected from the recently-completed, POGA-supported project: *Beyond Beta-glucan: Demonstrating health benefits of oat protein.*

After compositional analysis and lab testing, the project proceeded to an animal study in order to evaluate whether replacing the conventional protein source in rat chow with oat protein had any impact on risk factors for heart disease in rats fed a high-fat, high-sugar diet.

Joseph shared a summary of the key results, showing initial evidence that oat protein has an impact on cardiovascular health in animals. In response to the high-fat/high-sugar diet, rats developed early indicators of heart disease including higher cholesterol, enlarged heart chamber diameter and weaker pumping capacity (as expected). However, when oat protein was incorporated into the high-fat/high-sugar rat diet, these negative changes were not observed, suggesting a cardio-protective effect. A deeper look into the potential mechanism of action revealed that the activity of a liver enzyme primarily involved in cholesterol production in the body remained low with the oat protein plus high-fat/high-sugar diet. Dr. Joseph states, "The next step for this research would include human feeding studies to investigate if there would be similar effects. Before this can happen, the team will need to determine the level of oat protein required for humans, and develop test products containing optimum oat protein levels for the study."

Dr. Netticadan then presented more information on the cardio-protective potential of oat protein. The main risks for the development of cardiovascular disease (CVD) are obesity, diabetes and hypertension (high blood pressure).



Dr. Netticadan: the cardio-protective potential of oat protein

Dr. Netticadan explained more about the study design and initial findings: "Substitution of casein protein with oat protein in the diet was able to prevent abnormalities

(in heart structure and function, vascular function, as well as liver and kidney function) associated with hypertension in rats (in comparison to hypertensive animals on a regular casein protein diet)."

The researchers are preparing a paper on this study, to be submitted for review and publication in a scientific journal.

POGA published three articles about this project for the Oat Scoop newsletter. To learn more about it, please go to: <https://poga.ca/communication-advocacy/oat-scoop-newsletter/> (March 2021, November 2022 and November 2023 issues). To read the research summary, please visit: <https://poga.ca/research/research-projects/> and filter for *Principal Investigator: Joseph.*

In addition, the study of oat protein is receiving even more attention. POGA posted a recent Western Producer article, where Dr. Joseph is interviewed; to read the article, go to: <https://poga.ca/research-oat-protein/>. Also, POGA has agreed to support a project being conducted by Drs. Dylan Mackay (University of Manitoba) and Sijo Joseph (AAFC) entitled: *A randomized controlled pilot study evaluating acute and chronic effects of oat polyphenols (Avenanthramides) on glycaemic control, insulin sensitivity and gut microbiota in pre-diabetes.* Stay tuned for more project information in future issues of the Oat Scoop!

The project presented by Dr. Joseph was funded by POGA, PepsiCo Quaker, USA; and the Government of Canada under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership's AgriScience Program, a federal, provincial, territorial initiative.

## 2024 Saskatchewan Agriculture Crops Webinar Series

Winter crops webinars, hosted by SK Agriculture's Crops Extension Specialist Team, are happening now through April 3/24. All registrants will receive a recording of the event afterwards and will be available online for anyone to view. CCA Credits are pending and will only be available to those that attend the webinar live.

Registration is free for the online series. For more information and to register, go to:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/sask-ag-now/crops/crops-blog-posts/crops-winter-webinars>



## Another Key to Success: Attitude is Everything 2023 December POGA AGM Presentation

When you meet someone you know, what is the first question you usually ask them? If you're like most people, you'll probably ask, "How are you?" We can all predict the answer (the majority of the time): "I'm fine."

Matt Booth, author, attitude adjuster and presenter at the POGA AGM, decided to shake things up—he started greeting people by saying: "Tell me something good." At first, people are taken off guard and give simple answers, such as: "It's sunny today." However, once folks catch on, they prepare a better response for the next time they see Matt (and are excited about sharing 'that something' with him). Such is the way with people: if you ask them to engage in positive interactions, they look forward to that brand of exchange in the future.

Booth was raised on a farm, so he feels qualified to share that producers aren't always the most positive people. He jokingly provided an example: "If it's raining, we need sun; if it's not raining, it's too dry." He encouraged producers to speak positively of the business they're in. "You are feeding the world—that's a statement you can make and feel extremely proud of," says Booth.

The main message here is to be aware of our attitude and to change it if it leans toward the negative. Booth counseled, "We count items we think have value, but rarely do we put a number on our and others' attitude. Be aware of it because it really does count in the quality of our lives!"

One simple exercise people can try: take an 'attitude inventory' of yourself and the closest people around you. If the grade is low (negative overall attitude), then your responsibility is to affect yourself and your group by increasing the positivity of your own attitude. This not only boosts your outlook, but affects the entire group in the same way.

Start at home. We can guide children to find positive answers to questions (example: 'What did you learn in school today?'—the typical answer is 'nothing'). Perhaps you can find a way to ask questions that lean toward the positive, like: 'What was the best part of your day?' Knowing what your child values and asking a question that relates to that can change the direction of a conversation. And vice-versa: when your child asks you a question, find the most positive way to share your answer.

This approach has a trickle-down effect. For instance, instead of portraying farming as a 'grind' (and there is no denying it can be tough), being aware, proud and positive about 'the best job in the world' that produces food for people generates a literal mind shift within yourself. It can also change people's response to you.

Perspective is the awareness of our attitude. One expert says that a 3-to-1 ratio is involved—to construct an

optimistic outlook in life (and all the benefits that come with that), one must have three positive thoughts to cancel out the effects of one negative thought. One approach Matt recommends: every morning, start your day with as many positive thoughts that you can tally to counter the inevitable negative thoughts that arise while going about the day. Is it really cold outside today? Then, first thing in the morning, make a conscious thought to be grateful for

your warm house. Conjure up two more positive thoughts and you'll cancel out the inevitable 'kick in the pants' you'll receive when you open your front door and step into the frigid air. Do you deal with difficult people from time to time? Be thankful for your great kids. And so on.

Your perspective can create a 'gratitude attitude' that counteracts the difficulties that we all encounter. The country we live in affords us a life-style that many people can only dream of. The things we have and aren't consciously grateful for are luxuries for those in less fortunate regions. Keeping this in mind will, in itself, foster gratitude.

Booth closed his presentation with a challenge that is relatively easy to meet. Identify the most positive person in your life, then message and thank them for

being that affirmative influence. Booth shares, "Those people don't get the appreciation they deserve." Next, choose the most negative person you know. Message and let them know you are thinking about them and wish them a good day. Says Booth, "Negative people mostly need our support."

It might feel a bit foreign at first, but Booth is certain that making the effort to be more positive is worth it—the comparatively greater reward is shared between ourselves and those we engage with.

To learn more about Matt Booth, visit his website at: <https://www.mattbooth.com/>, or check out his YouTube page at: <https://www.youtube.com/@MattBoothSpeaker>.



Matt Booth: "Tell me something good!"

### Your AOGC Board at Work

AOGC Chair Dylan Robinson attended the Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) AGM in Edmonton on Jan 11.

### Your MOGA Board at Work

MOGA Audit Chair Bob Lepischak attended a Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) meeting in Winnipeg on January 23-24 to discuss current issues and trends in Ag, and elect their representatives for KAP's board of directors.

This is the second and final recipe from POGA's 'Oat Give-Away' project in Northern Alberta. Grain Millers, Save-On-Foods and 30 municipalities partnered to distribute free oats for residents in those municipalities in September and October, 2023. A special thanks is extended to the Municipal District of Spirit River No. 133 for organizing the distribution!

To read the full story about the project's success, including acknowledgement of everyone involved, please see page 4 of this issue!



## Ingredients

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 lime zest
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves (optional)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp canola oil
- 4 fish fillets
- 1 egg lightly beaten
- 1/2 tsp hot sauce to taste

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).
2. Place oats, lime zest, cilantro, salt and oil in a food processor, pulse until coarsely ground. Transfer to a shallow bowl or plate.
3. In a second bowl, whisk together egg and hot sauce. Add fish fillets to the egg mixture, stirring to coat.
4. Working with one fillet at a time, remove from egg, shaking off excess, and roll in oat mixture.
5. Place on a baking tray, lightly sprayed with cooking spray and bake for 15 minutes.

Serve with your favorite dipping sauce and enjoy!



GRAIN MILLERS

western family

**Do you know how to share content on Social Media? If not here are some quick steps to help spread the word and make the Oats Everyday campaign an even bigger success!**


### Facebook

1. Visit the Facebook profile ([@OatsEverydayCA](#))
2. Find a post to share with your own followers
3. Click "Share" to either:
  - Share to your Profile/Newsfeed
  - Share to your Facebook Story
  - Send in Messenger to friends
  - Share a link to the post via text messaging or email

### YouTube

1. Visit the YouTube profile ([@OatsEveryday](#))
2. Find a video to share within your network
3. Click "Share" to either:
  - Share to a social media platform of your choice
  - Copy and share a link to the video via text messaging or email

### Instagram

1. Visit the Instagram profile ([@Oats\\_Everyday](#))
2. Find a post to share
3. Click the "paper plane" icon  to either:
  - Add the post to your story
  - Share a post directly with your friends
4. Click the ellipsis ... to
  - Share the Instagram post via iMessage, WhatsApp or Email

*Social Media sharing tips courtesy of: Emerging Ag Inc.*

### Do You Have Your Own Content to Share?

1. Choose a video or recipe for sharing on any of the three platforms.
2. Compose a message to accompany your content.
3. Tag relevant accounts within your post:
  - Instagram: [@Oats\\_Everyday](#) or
  - Facebook: [@OatsEverydayCA](#)
4. Include relevant hashtags within your post (note: Oats Everyday does not have Twitter for tagging): #CanadianOats #OatsEveryday



## MOGA-Supported Great Tastes of Manitoba (GTOM) 🍴

### 2024 MOGA AGM Presentation

Donalee Jones, Senior Producer of GTOM, provided AGM attendees with the history and achievements of the venture to connect the general public to the food grown and raised by Manitoba producers. Established in 1990, the television show is Manitoba's most-watched food series. Jones shared, "I got involved in GTOM because, as a farmer, I wanted to help share the story of agriculture with a consumer audience. I wanted to see as many local ingredients featured as possible, and MOGA was one of the first players to join us as a product placement sponsor in 2017."

They have ~25K show viewers/week on CTV Winnipeg, reach ~833K on the website (<https://greattastesmb.ca/>), and have ~16K followers on social media platforms. Jones states, "We are on track to reach 2M people via our digital channels annually and have seen an 88% increase in traffic year over year on our website." The show also airs on The Rural Channel across Canada.

A January GTOM survey of 582 Manitobans indicated that, along with other positive responses indicating viewers try the recipes and are happy with results: *96% of GTOM viewers said they have a high level of trust in food grown in Manitoba.* Jones made an interesting point about another survey result: *42% said they cook more than 8 meals per week at home.* This coincides with a Canadian Centre for Food Integrity survey, where 42% of Canadians say they will be eating outside the home less in 2024 because of the rising cost of food. Jones feels that this highlights the need to provide families with both recipes and food education (handling, preparation, etc.). Programs like GTOM help to replace the home economics training children used to receive in school.

The videos (also posted on their website) include several recipes from each TV episode. Individual recipes (accompanied by a video) can also be searched (and easily

filtered by Ingredient, Course or Preparation/Cooking Method). GTOM now has 23 recipes containing oats and also share the economic benefits and value of oats (and all ingredients produced in Manitoba). They also house a collection of videos featuring stories from farmers and other people with careers focused in agriculture.



Great Tastes of Manitoba is a farm to table collaboration showcasing the nutritious, delicious, affordable foods grown by Manitoba's farmers.



Here are some links to recipes recently posted using oats: <https://greattastesmb.ca/recipe/lentil-soda-bread/> and <https://greattastesmb.ca/recipe/three-seed-granola/>. Also, be sure to check out the recent Coming Home video, which skillfully illustrates the connection of farmers (and their children) to the land. It is currently featured on their home webpage and also posted under the Our Farmers page tab at the top.

Mark Feb. 12, 2025 on your calendar to attend the 2025 MOGA AGM and hear from another interesting speaker!

## Alberta Oat Board At Work

AOGC met with The Honourable RJ Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation on Jan 23. Discussion topics included: Insurance and Business Risk Management programs; Fertilizer Emissions Reduction Target; and, Government of Alberta's funding priorities and budget expectations.



Left to right: Director Anthony Van Rootselaar; Chair Dylan Robinson; Minister Sigurdson; Executive Director Shawna Mathieson; Vice-Chair Jason Wiese; Audit Chair Greg Bott



## Producers Want Weather Forecasts 2023 December POGA AGM Presentation

Drew Lerner, President and Senior Agricultural Meteorologist for World Weather Inc, is no stranger to oat growers. Hopefully you have seen him in person over the years and read about him right here in the Oat Scoop (and probably heard him on the radio, too).

In the 2022 March Oat Scoop, the article on Lerner's past presentation mentioned some of the many factors and weather influences that World Weather Inc. considers to make their predictions. To access the article, go to: <https://poga.ca/communication-advocacy/oat-scoop-newsletter/>

During his 2023 POGA AGM presentation, Lerner added yet another influence on the weather. He stressed, "Some volcanoes can have a significant effect on the weather, and the Hunga Tonga volcano that erupted on January 15, 2022 was the most significant volcanic eruption in the modern era. It injected a lot of moisture into the stratosphere because the volcano erupted from under water in the Pacific Ocean; not much has been reported on it and we are still learning about what effect it has, and will have, on our weather."

The increased stratospheric moisture resulting from the volcano creates warmer conditions in the troposphere (where we live) because it blocks the heat that would normally be released into the upper atmosphere.

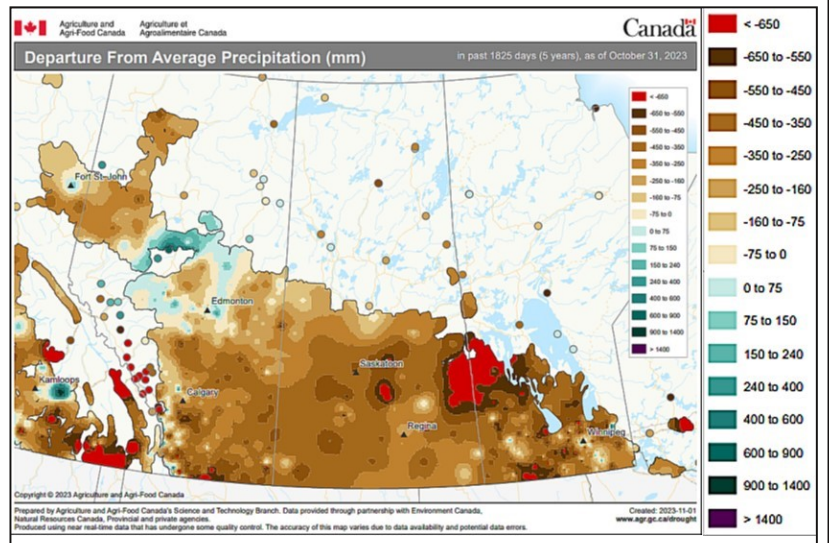
In addition, western Canada has been influenced by an 18-year upper-air wind-flow pattern and a 22-year solar cycle. These factors, combined with the unpredictable effects of the Hunga Tonga volcano, is making it harder to forecast when parts of western Canada may break out of the drought pattern that lingers.

While El Niño is still active, there have been signs that indicate it may have peaked in 2023 and could weaken into 2024. If this occurs, there is an opportunity for snow and rain in the late winter and spring. This will be important to resolve the subsoil moisture deficit in many parts of the prairies. More snow and rainfall are needed for those dry areas to begin to regain lost moisture.

Lerner mentioned the return of wetter-biased weather in Europe and western Asia. He shares, "This is a good sign that the lingering effects of La Niña have finally abated there. Overall, there is not much to talk about regarding current weather in most of the world, except for the possibility that some areas may experience surplus moisture in the future." So, while some western Canadian producers may feel that it can't happen soon enough, hopefully that provides optimism for the future here.

These are just a few tidbits from Drew Lerner's presentation. He delivered much more information at the POGA AGM, which in itself is a very good reason to attend in the future! Producers receive more information at the conference than can possibly be shared in the newsletter but we do try our best to cover the 'highlights'.

World Weather Inc. has a Canadian site as well. To see the information available, go to: <https://worldweather.cc/>



Moisture deficits in the Canadian prairie from Nov/18 - Oct/23. Lerner stated, "Moisture demand will be high for a while in 2024."

## Your MOGA Board At Work

MOGA met with The Honourable Ron Kostyshyn, Manitoba Minister of Agriculture, on Dec 4/23. Discussion topics included: fall fertilizer application cut-off date; funding for breeding programs and staff; value-added processing in Manitoba; Manitoba Agriculture funding priorities; and, Business Risk Management programs.



From left to right: director Edgar Scheurer, Vice Chair Ray Mazinke, director Jenneth Johanson, Minister Kostyshyn, Executive Director Shawna Mathieson, Audit Chair Bob Lepischak

MOGA partnered with ADAMA Canada Ltd. on Jan 16 to host a hospitality room at Ag Days in Brandon, MB. Board Chair Yves Lapointe, Vice Chair Ray Mazinke, Audit Chair Bob Lepischak, and board members Jenneth Johanson and Edgar Scheurer were in attendance. Also, The Honourable Ron Kostyshyn, Manitoba Minister of Agriculture, was in attendance and the board spent time with him there.




MOGA Vice Chair Ray Mazinke and Minister Kostyshyn



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The Honourable David Marit, Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture, addressing the audience at the Jan/24 SaskOats AGM



At the Jan/24 SaskOats AGM: Thanks to out-going director Chris Rundel for his service on behalf of producers



The Honourable RJ Sigurdson, Alberta Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, addressing the audience at the Jan/24 AOGC AGM

## BREEDING PROJECT PRESENTATION AT THE JAN 22/24 AOGC AGM

At the AGM, **Jim Dyck, Oat Advantage**, spoke about two oat-breeding projects:

- A 55-lb bushel high-protein oat, with top grain yield (funded by POGA). For more information on this project, go to: <https://poga.ca/communication-advocacy/oat-scoop-newsletter/>, November 2023 issue, page 2. To read Dyck's progress reports, go to: <https://poga.ca/research/research-projects/> and filter for Principal Investigator: Dyck.
- Export-Ready Alberta Oats, funded by Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) and AOGC. This partial-year project is the second stage of a larger project to select and develop oat lines specifically adapted to Alberta growing conditions. Alberta's proximity to Pacific export routes means that it is well situated to meet expected demand for oat exports to Asia.

In the 2024 Summer Oat Scoop, POGA will be publishing the annual Breeding Programs article. So stay tuned for progress reports of all supported breeding projects and programs, including the POGA-supported project listed above.

# Your POGA Board At Work: The Ottawa Missions



**POGA**  
Prairie Oat Growers Association

The definition of the term 'At Work' in our regular Board at Work items includes the board's responsibility to make difficult decisions and to ensure producers' money is being well spent.

Over the years, POGA has conducted Ottawa Missions to lobby the Federal Government on issues of importance to oat growers and updated producers on the meetings in various issues of The Oat Scoop.

Prior to 2021, POGA delegates traveled to Ottawa each year to meet in-person; since then, these meetings have been performed virtually. While this costs the organization less than attending and meeting in person, it is still a sizable expense to conduct the mission due to all the preparation, organization, and on-line attendance time.

POGA has tracked progress the delegates have made as a result of their communications with government officials from these mission meetings. The board is sorry to report to producers that, over recent years, there is little to no progress to convey.

For example, a consistent POGA priority was to deliver the message to the government that their support/funding of oat breeding programs is crucial and benefits not only producers but also the Government of Canada in the following ways:

- to increase production (which benefits producers, but also addresses the Government's target to increase exports from Canada (oat and oat-related, and other Ag commodities and products);
- to encourage crop rotation for healthy soils as stated by the Federal Government in the Sustainable Ag Strategy (SAS);
- to meet the Federal Government's self-determined sustainability goals; and,
- to acknowledge that oat production in Canada reflects a \$4 billion/annum industry. Breeding is essential to keep small crops, like oats, in the rotation in order to increase crop diversity; this leads to increased income, resulting in much more income tax revenue remitted to the government than it ever pays in support of oat projects.

In spite of this, the Government of Canada cut funding even more this year, not only to a 50% match (down from 75% five years ago) but later, they cut an additional 23% below that. The Government's decision to cut funding was made in spite of twelve (including POGA) industry partners' commitment to match dollars to increase support for this breeding program.

At the 2023 Ottawa Mission, to prove the damage to crop production when breeding programs are not supported, POGA specifically provided examples of planted flax acres before and after AAFC announced it was eliminating the AAFC breeding program. For reference, as of 2022, Canadian flax acres have dropped by more than 50% since the time AAFC announced the cut in 2014. This fell on deaf ears.

The POGA board has concluded that the current government is not listening to or considering POGA's and the Ag industry's input regarding the support needed to achieve industry and Government goals. While the oat breeding program is not being cut entirely (at this time), it is suffering a 'death by 1000 cuts'.

This sequence of cuts essentially decreases the oat breeding program funding down to amounts received in 2013 despite significant industry support for an increase. Obviously, this makes for an unrealistic budget for the AAFC oat breeding program, given the significant cost increases since that time.

The POGA board regrets to inform producers that it will not be conducting an Ottawa Mission this year, due to the lack of response and support from the Federal Government to our ongoing efforts to deliver well-thought-out and practical input to ensure the Ag industry prospers and the Government meets its goals and targets.

The board will instead direct these funds to existing and future advocacy activities and other important projects (e.g., oat-related research and marketing). We will continue to meet with provincial governments and work with the Grain Growers of Canada (including sending representatives on their Ottawa missions when possible). SaskOats is also engaging through SaskCrops to advocate on behalf of producers.

We always look for new approaches to gain the Federal Government's respect for the value of oats. For instance, in 2023 we instigated an awareness campaign and distributed coupons to Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, Senators and other staff at Parliament Hill (for redemption of one oat milk coffee or tea beverage of their choosing at Bridgehead coffeehouse in Ottawa). The coupons were redeemed by less than 7% of recipients. These efforts are learning experiences. We welcome any suggestions from our producer members for outreach ideas that could enhance Federal Government appreciation for the ever-increasing value of oats to the Canadian economy.

The board is interested in working collaboratively with the Federal Government and will continue to monitor their actions and responses to agricultural concerns. POGA will consider resuming the Ottawa Missions when the board perceives that the Government is willing to listen, act on and support the agricultural industry's requirements, and that producers' money would be well spent by meeting with the Federal Government.

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