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CWB

Canadian Grain

A Newsletter from the Canadian Wheat Board

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The 2004 harvest in review

Harvesting began in the first week of September, but progress was slowed by persistent rains in the northern grainbelt and the slow maturation of the crop.

Mother Nature posed considerable challenges to farmers in Western Canada during 2004. Cool weather during the growing season resulted in a later-than-normal harvest, which reduced supplies of high-quality spring wheat, durum and barley. The portion of the spring wheat and durum crops falling into the top two grades is both expected to be the lowest in over 10 years. Less than one-third of the spring wheat crop is expected to make the standard for the top two Canada Western Red Spring (CWRS) wheat grades.

The most significant factor affecting the quality of grain last fall was an early frost, which occurred August 20, 2004. The frost covered about one-third of western Canadian growing areas and resulted in both yield losses and grade degradation throughout the region.

Harvesting began in the first week of September, but progress was slowed by both persistent rains in the northern grainbelt and slow maturation of the crop. Only 10 per cent of the crop was harvested by the third week of September, which was close to three weeks behind normal. Conditions improved in late September and the first two weeks of October, as an extended period of warm, dry weather prevailed over the entire Prairie region. Harvest progress reached 90 per cent complete by October 20, 2004. Rains and snow in late October brought harvesting activity to a halt, but warm, dry weather in November allowed farmers to complete harvest. Parts of northern Alberta and Saskatchewan were too wet and some crops will remain unharvested in those areas.

Statistics Canada estimates total wheat production in Western Canada to be 23.9 million tonnes; spring wheat production is estimated at 18.1 million tonnes; durum wheat production is estimated at 4.9 million tonnes and barley production is estimated at 12.3 million tonnes. All production estimates are well above last year's levels and are the result of near record yields.

Protein levels of both CWRS and durum are significantly below last year and the five-year average, due to the higher yields experienced in 2004. The cool growing season resulted in minimal stress to the crop, which was reflected in protein contents that are over one per cent lower than last year's levels. ■

A BRIGHT IDEA

Want to take leftovers home from your favourite restaurant? In the near future, you could be taking them home wrapped in wheat.

Scientists are investigating the use of wheat starch to create environmentally-friendly, disposable containers.

Until recently, these polystyrene take-out containers have been made of petroleum-based ingredients that end up in landfills around the globe. Slow to decompose, they add another burden to the environment.

But, prototype containers made from wheat starch have proven to be as light-weight, leak-proof and convenient as their plastic-based cousins. However, once tossed in the trash, these containers decompose in only a few weeks.

David Iwaasa
named alumnus of the year

David Iwaasa, general manager of the CWB's Tokyo office, has received special recognition from his former university.

Iwaasa has been named 2004 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year by the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada for his accomplishments in international trade and finance and continued efforts to represent Canada abroad.

As general manager, Iwaasa is the CWB's chief representative in Japan, a position he has held since 1997.

Iwaasa was raised on a farm near Raymond, Alberta and lived in Japan between 1967 and 1970. He returned to Alberta and completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in economics at the University of Lethbridge in 1972. He graduated with Great Distinction and received the President's Research Scholarship.

He returned to Japan in 1972 to study at the University of Kyoto, before returning to Canada to complete his Masters degree in 1975. Prior to joining the CWB, Iwaasa worked for the Department of Finance of the Federal Government of Canada, served at the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank. He also served at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, Japan.

CWB President and CEO Adrian Measner praised Iwaasa for his commitment to western Canadian farmers.

"He is well respected by our customers in Japan and has been successful in managing our business there," he said. "David has also done well in expanding our business into the Korean market and is very active in promoting Canada in general." ■

CWB President and CEO Adrian Measner praised Iwaasa for his commitment to western Canadian farmers.

CWB celebrates
10th anniversary of Beijing office

It was an anniversary celebration that marked more than the development of office space.

International trade based on the long friendship between western Canada and the China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuff Corporation (COFCO) was the main theme of a September 2004 reception held in Beijing, China. The event celebrated the 10th anniversary of the CWB's office in Beijing.

The CWB first sold western Canadian wheat to COFCO in 1961. Since then, more than 120 million tonnes of Canadian grain have been exported to China.

The CWB was represented by President and CEO Adrian Measner, Chief Operating Officer Ward Weisensel, Darrell Bushuk, senior marketing manager for Asia-Pacific and Haiguang Shi, general manager of the CWB's Beijing office.

"China's economy is one of the fastest growing in the world," said Measner during his speech to the reception guests. "Since our first contact with COFCO, a bridge of friendship has been built between our nations – a bridge built on a foundation of grain."

Several honoured guests from COFCO were also in attendance, including Chairman Zhou Ming-Chen and President Liu Fuchun. ■

Representing the CWB (L to R): Adrian Measner; Darrell Bushuk; Haiguang Shi; Ward Weisensel.

Ultrasonic Bread

Typically associated with medical procedures, ultrasound is now being tested for application in the baking industry.

Researchers at the University of Manitoba, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, are investigating the application of low-intensity ultrasound technology to both dough and bakery end-products.

Ultrasound involves using a transducer to emit inaudible sound waves. These waves fan out through an object. When they hit something dense, the sound bounces back and is translated into a visual image by the computer.

The non-invasive, non-destructive properties of ultrasound make it ideal for measuring the quality and properties of wheat flours, baking ingredients and flour dough.

Baking is a complex process that relies on the quality of flour used. Flour quality is dependent on wheat quality, which constantly fluctuates, depending on growing and harvesting conditions. This makes it difficult for commercial bakers to predict the quality of their end products and means that new batter batches must be tested for outcome, which slows production and increases cost.

Ultrasound could prove to be the answer. Bakers would be able to see what is happening inside their breads as they move through the production line, allowing the line to be fine-tuned as it operates.

The technology could prove to put producers of dough and baked goods in a better position to make the most of their products and increase customer satisfaction.

The project is supported by industry and Canada's Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, a program that promotes university-industry interaction and technology commercialization.

Industry participants include the CWB and the Canadian International Grains Institute (CIGI), General Mills Inc., Weston Bakeries Ltd., AIC Flour Service Division, Acatris Inc., Danisco USA Inc., and Griffith Laboratories. ■

Faces and places

Adrian Measner, CWB president and chief executive officer, visited Sinograin in Beijing, China in July 2004, where Pan Hongliang, Sinograin vice-president, presented Measner with a gift.

Staff from COFCO stand with CWB representatives during the dinner and reception to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the CWB's Beijing office.

CWB staff met with Chinese grain industry representatives at a dinner and reception held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the CWB's Beijing office. From left to right: Darrell Bushuk, senior marketing manager Asia-Pacific; Adrian Measner CWB president and CEO; Chen Xiwen, vice-chairman of China economic development association and Haiguang Shi, general manager of the CWB's Beijing office in Beijing, China.

The Japanese Flour Millers Association visited the CWB head office located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in September 2004.

Back row (L to R): Mr. Tomio Tanaka (executive officer, Showa Sangyo Co., Ltd.); Mr. Hiroaki Takaoka (general manager, Nitto Flour Milling Co., Ltd.); Mr. Kazuyoshi Miyake (president, Miyake Flour Milling Co., Ltd.); Mr. Tsutomu Shigeta (executive director, Flour Millers Association); Mr. Kiyonari Fukuda (president, Central Flour Milling Co., Ltd.)

Front row (L to R): Mr. Yuzuru Hirose (president, Kinki flour Milling Co., Ltd.); Mr. Yasuo Sakata (manager, Production Control, Nisshin Flour Milling Inc.); Mr. Toshifumi Horiuchi (manager, Business Administration Div., Nippon Flour Mills Co., Ltd.); David Iwaasa (general manager, CWB Tokyo Office)

A toast to celebrate the 10th anniversary at the CWB's Beijing office.

Canadian Grain is a publication of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). Canadian Grain is designed to keep our Asia-Pacific grain industry partners informed about the Canadian system of grain marketing, CWB initiatives and factors that influence the marketing of western Canadian wheat and barley.

Readers are invited to submit questions and comments to:

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