

November 2013

The Fall of 2013 will be Remembered for Bringing Some of the Best Harvesting Conditions on Record



Glen Jay operates the harvester for IFJ Farms in Prince Edward Island.

This "Spud Plucker" is capable of picking up 18 rows at one time. Photo Courtesy of Steve Sharratt.

Some areas of the country were challenged by wet weather at planting time, creating late planting dates, while others were worried about an extended dry period in the middle of the summer. However, in the final stage of the season, Mother Nature came through with the required conditions for getting a very high quality crop into storage.

Unharvested acres will be very low this year in comparison to other recent harvests. Most areas have also indicated a smaller than average tuber set which has created a larger than normal size profile. While it is great to have the size, it has also resulted in an increased incidence of hollow heart. In addition to great type profile in table spuds, solids are high in chip potatoes. Warmer temperatures have also contributed to good colour profiles in fry potatoes.

Visible Evidence for Success

For Dave Buhler, the success of his potato seed-piece treatment coverage was clear, because of a bit of colour. New Titan Emesto from Bayer CropScience is pink, which lets growers know right away if their product has been properly applied.

“We were able to gauge our coverage quickly and visually,” says Buhler, a fourth generation grower who farms seed, table and commercial potatoes on his farm near Winkler, Manitoba. “There was no exposure to dust for our employees, the product dried very quickly and we had great control.”

Last year, he participated in side-by-side trials comparing Titan Emesto against conventional dusts. He cut 4000 bags with Titan Emesto and was able to get a good look at how it performed. He says that as a seed producer, a product like Titan Emesto has added value because he knows that the entire seed-piece has been covered, and it provides the opportunity to rotate fungicide groups in seed treatments.

“You don’t want to bring diseases into your neighbour’s farm, so you want to make sure every seed-piece is clean” he says. “We grow table potatoes as well, where perfect skins are important. The complete coverage from a liquid helps keep away diseases that can affect the skins.”

Titan Emesto controls seed-borne fusarium tuber rot (including resistant strains), seed-borne rhizoctonia, and has good activity on silver scurf. It also offers growers the broadest spectrum insect control available from a seed-piece treatment. Its flowability, low application and water rates offer ease of use, thorough coverage and subsequently improved efficacy.

Titan Emesto is a co-pack of potato insecticide Titan, and Emesto Silver, a potato seed-piece fungicide with two new modes of action, a Group 3 (prothioconazole) and Group 7 (penflufen). Both of these actives are new and unique to fungicide potato seed-piece treatments.

“This is an important development for resistance management today and in the future,” says David Kikkert, Portfolio Manager, Horticulture with Bayer CropScience. “Today, it provides growers with a way to protect against current resistant seed-borne fusarium strains. Having two modes of action working on a specific pest, along with proper rotation with alternate chemistries is a great resistance management strategy going forward.”

New application equipment isn’t always necessary for growers switching to liquid application. Current equipment can be modified to work, so growers who use dust may just need to make a few changes. The key consideration is coverage and how it is achieved is up to the grower.

“Equipment collaboration and accurate coverage means consistent efficacy and more yield,” says Kikkert. “Growers also may want to make the switch to liquid because there is less exposure for workers, it’s easier to apply and the product is less bulky to handle.”

Titan Emesto offers long lasting protection against the major potato insects and seed-piece diseases.

Seed treatments are also the only way to use fungicides to protect against seed-borne fusarium and seed-borne rhizoctonia. Treating seed-pieces right from the start means better emergence and stronger roots.

Buhler says they still plan on continuing to also use dust products, primarily for issues such as late blight. However last year they had no issues with late blight so they aren't worried about control in this year's potato seed.

At Russell Jonk's farm in Bruxelles, Manitoba, late blight also wasn't an issue last year, so he knows it won't be a factor in this year's potato crop. He grows 1500 acres of potatoes on irrigated land, as both seed potatoes and for processing. In spring 2012 they conducted a demonstration trial to test Titan Emesto against other products.

"We've used liquids for many years, ever since the effectiveness of neonic insecticides became clear, and Titan Emesto works well. It is easy to apply, and works as well as others we've used," says Jonk. "It is clean to handle for our employees and can be applied accurately."

He says the colour in the product had additional benefits for him, aside from knowing coverage was uniform. "It was nice because we could be confident that our treater was working correctly," he says.

He also says that his planter operator said the accuracy of the planter went up with Titan Emesto. "He told me that the product dried quickly and the seed had better flow in the planter hopper, which made his job easier," he says.

Jonk says that his trial took place later in the season and that they were pleased with the efficacy and is interested to use the product during a full season under cooler conditions to get the full benefit of Titan Emesto on seed-borne rhizoctonia.

"Titan Emesto was developed with growers in mind," adds Kikkert. "It's a complete potato seed-piece treatment that combines the broadest spectrum insecticide protection, with a fungicide that protects against major diseases including fusarium tuber rot, seed-borne rhizoctonia and silver scurf. It is just one of the ways Bayer CropScience is bringing new innovative solutions to growers."



Left: Morley Wood and his sons Greg and Jeff harvesting Goldrush in Tryon, P.E.I. Morley was one of the founding directors of the UPGC.



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Bayer CropScience

Certificate of Appreciation: Garry Sloik



Above: Garry Sloik (left) receiving Certificate of Appreciation from Ray Keenan, UPGC Chair

Garry Sloik recently retired after 33 years of service as manager of the Keystone Potato Producers Association. Garry's leadership in the industry will be missed. He had a diversified career which included working for Carnation Foods, McCain Foods, Manitoba Agriculture (MAFRI), and owning his own potato farm.

In addition to negotiating contracts for Manitoba processing growers, Garry also served on many national committees. He was Secretary of the Potato Marketing Association of North America and also represented Manitoba on the Canadian Potato Council.

Most importantly for our organization, he was one of the founding Co-Chairs of the United Potato Growers of Canada. He had the vision that if potato supply was more evenly matched with demand, it would remove not only surplus potatoes affecting fresh demand but those dragging down processing contract settlements as well. Garry has been known to play the odd round of golf, so we wish him well in improving his game. He and Rita are also looking forward to spending more time with their grandchildren.

Welcome to Dan Sawatzky

Dan Sawatzky is the new executive manager of the Keystone Potato Producers Association. Dan farmed with his brothers in the McGregor area of Manitoba and served on the board twice, carrying the position of chairman in the last term.

Dan is well known from his previous experience and an excellent candidate for this position. The leadership of the UPGC looks forward to working with him.

Industry Responds to Health and Wellness Trend Driving Softer Outlook for Fresh Potatoes

The following article is reprinted from Rabobank's AgFocus Newsletter

Although the health, wellness, and convenience headwinds against fresh potato demand are likely to persist in the medium term, longer term there is reason for some hope that demand could turn around as the industry responds to these trends.

For example, new proprietary varieties are being developed with beneficial attributes. A developing example in the U.S. is the Classic Russet, which contains up to 32% more protein than the industry standard Russet Burbank variety. Another example, the Purple Pelisse, has high antioxidant levels compared to other varieties. Both of these example varieties enjoy health characteristics that appeal to a wider range of consumers, which gives some hope of overcoming the traditional positioning of potatoes as being a high starch, carb-loaded vegetable.

However, it takes years if not decades to propagate and commercialise new varieties before they can be widely grown. This protracted development process combined with the additional time needed to educate consumers regarding the new health benefits means any positive impact on demand is likely to be longer term. In addition, the trends of increasing demand for convenience in food preparation and eating away from home are likely to continue, so the challenge of turning the tide will be great.



Above: Rollo Bay Holdings Harvesting Russet Burbanks in Eastern Prince Edward Island

Dirt and Trash Elimination at Source of Harvest



Spudnik Dirt Separator

Many farms have been using dirt eliminators to remove clay and field stone for many years now. What is changing in Canada and the U.S. is the rotation of crops being grown previous to and after potatoes.

Grain and oilseed crops have become very profitable, especially over the past three years, and now commonly replace other crops previously grown in a potato rotation. Corn, and in particular the corn root (because of its light weight) is one of the most difficult materials to remove in out of field delivery.

Two of the stops on the PMANA tour last summer included transloading sites in Boardman, Oregon operated by the Stahl Colony. One of the major changes in contract language in the Columbia Basin is the inclusion of deduct clauses for foreign material. Equipment companies have gone to great lengths to develop eliminators which use the principle of running high volumes of air to remove plant trash such as corn. Out of field transloading requires machines with very high capacity to deliver the huge tonnage required to keep French fry processing plants fed at the start of the season. Growers observed the Spudnik (operating above) and the Lockwood (operating below), and felt that although each machine had slightly different operating principles, they each produced a clean product free from foreign material. As more and more low heat unit corn hybrids are developed and grown in Canada, it may be something growers will have to prepare for.



Lockwood Dirt Separator



Potato Business Summit

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2014
HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

FIRST DAY OF
POTATO EXPO 2014

A Comprehensive Analysis of the Global and North American Potato Industry

- World Commodity Outlook
- US Consumption Trends
- US Foodservice Trends
- 2014 Planting Outlook

8:00am to 12:30pm

Followed by a Complimentary Luncheon

- Registration Required -

Free Registration - Limited Space - Registration Required by January 3:
www.PotatoBusinessSummit.com or 801-266-5050

POTATO EXPO 2014 Kick-Off Reception

5:30pm to 7:00pm

Co-sponsored by UPGA and:



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of Canada



New and Unique Foliar Fungicides Will Soon Be Available to Potato Growers

More than 150 different varieties of potatoes are grown in Canada with nearly 365,000 acres devoted to the industry. While existing fungicides have been able to help manage many disease pressures, growers have been hard pressed to find a new, dependable, dual mode of action product to control yield-reducing diseases like early blight and brown leaf spot (*Alternaria spp.*).

Recent field trials of Luna Tranquility revealed that potato growers will soon have a new solution. Luna Tranquility is an all-in-one formulation with two modes of action and is recommended for use in a preventative treatment program. Already considered a trusted fungicide for apple and grape growers, the Bayer CropScience product demonstrated unparalleled disease protection against the leaf spot complex (early blight and brown leaf spot), as well as white mold and black dot.

Unlike any other previous SDHI fungicides, Luna Tranquility includes a new and unique Group 7 (fluopyram) and proven Group 9 (pyrimethanil) modes of action, which provided superior control of early blight, brown leaf spot and white mold in field trials. The fungicide also demonstrated effective protection against black dot. It has recently received approval for registration as a foliar fungicide for potatoes and can be applied by either ground or air.

Agronomist Lindsay Fletcher of Crop Protection Services, who participated in the field trials, found Luna Tranquility to be great at combating yield reducing diseases, adding that it was “nice to have a chemistry that controls both parts of *alternaria spp.*” Fletcher also noted that the unique chemistry behind Luna Tranquility could offer growers an effective resistance management tool.



Harvesting Potatoes in Upper Knoxford, New Brunswick

Canadian Tablestock Conference Call

The Eastern Tablestock Call in previous years has included the provinces of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario. Although the volume of table potatoes is less in Western Canada, it was felt there were merits to each part of the country participating in discussion of market situations. With technology and transportation improvements, the market has effectively shrunk. The call is held on every second Monday at the following time:

- ▶ 12:30pm Atlantic
- ▶ 11:30am Eastern
- ▶ 10:30am Central
- ▶ 9:30am Mountain
- ▶ 8:30am Pacific

Dial in number: **1-877-394-5901**

Access code: **8067446**

Feedback so far has been very positive; however, the information is only as good as the participants. We have started with a historical list of interested participants, but if we are missing you, contact us and you will receive the call notice and a call summary sent out on the evening of the call date.

Upcoming Meetings

Nov 19-21	Potato Growers of Alberta Conference, Calgary, Alberta
Nov 22	PEI Potato Board AGM, Charlottetown, PEI
Nov 22	Statistics Canada Release of Canadian Potato Production
Nov 25	PMANA Fall Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada
Nov 29	Potatoes NB AGM, Florenceville, New Brunswick
Jan 8	Potato Business Summit, San Antonio, Texas
Jan 8-10	Potato Expo, San Antonio, Texas
Jan 28-30	Manitoba Potato Days, Brandon, Manitoba
Feb 21-22	International Potato Technology Expo, Charlottetown, PEI
March 4-6	Canadian Horticultural Council AGM, Kelowna, BC



Harvesting Potatoes at Northbank Potato Farms, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta



Quebec Field Day at Dolbec

Points To Ponder

As I write this column, a few producers are still harvesting but most have the crop in the bin. The next question for our organization is how many potatoes were harvested in Canada. At the United Potato Growers of Canada, we use the information collected by Statistics Canada to make our projections. Stats Canada rely on the expertise of local provincial specialists and the information you provide as growers to make their assessment. Bottom line: if inaccurate information is provided to their surveyors, it travels up the path. Please be patient and take a few moments to answer their questions.



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Our organization is also concerned about the future of our potato information gathering system within Statistics Canada. Due to government cutbacks, they have closed their regional office in Truro this week, leaving a major deficiency in the system. It has taken several years to build a level of trust and respect with the people manning that office, only to now have it serviced in Ottawa. The US government shutdown has shown us just how difficult it is to work in a vacuum. The USDA pricing and shipping information has been unavailable for three weeks, creating fear of the unknown in the marketplace.

Finally, I had an interesting call from a CBC reporter in Winnipeg in early August. He had just bought fries from a local chip wagon and the sign out front said “prices have tripled from our potato supplier.” The chip wagon buys their potatoes from a national food service wholesaler in Canada and the US. The reporter wanted to know if there was a story in this. I said, “Yes, there is – Supply and Demand.”



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