



POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

Crop Transition Conference

Canadian Crop Report, June 19, 2020

The Crop Transition Conference has been held for the past 12 years in Minneapolis. This year due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was held virtually. Our report is below.

COVID 19 has affected the movement of our 2019 Canadian potato crop in a big way. On May 13, surveys across all the respective provinces in Canada showed about 760 million lbs of potatoes that were surplus at that time as a result of decreased demand from restaurant closures. The excess at that time, was valued at \$105 million dollars, with \$92 million dollars for processing and \$13 million dollars for seed.

Since early May, potatoes have gone for many different uses to try and move them before the 2020 crop needs to be stored. Fresh market channels took what they could. Dehy has been busy. Processors have agreed to run longer on old crop and have sourced out additional freezer capacity to do so. Some potatoes have gone to feed lots. Some piles are now being buried. We have noticed, that each week the message from processors seemed to be changing somewhat, thinking they might use more volume than originally thought. That scenario across North America has escalated in recent days. Unfortunately, seed producers were big losers in this deal, as their situation changed very little over time.

For the 2020 crop, our official acreage estimate will not be out until mid-July, but it is estimated that Canadian potato acreage could be down 15,000 acres, most directly related to cuts in processing contracts. At this time, we do not see much reduction in seed acres while fresh acres are flat for some provinces and increased in a couple of others. Chip acres will have slight increases, reacting to good demand over the past few months.

The planting season went well for most provinces, with a cool start but few interruptions due to wet weather. Planting was more challenged in Manitoba with wet soils from last fall and very cool temperatures this spring, so the crop is 5-7 days later.

Planting just wound up last week in the provinces of PEI, and Ontario.

Growing conditions have been very good, with adequate moisture, however most areas are reporting that soils now would like some rainfall, as we seem to get more and more desiccating winds each succeeding year.

A lot of fields in the eastern part of the country are at emergence. In the west, Manitoba stands are 8 in high, Alberta is a week away from row closure, and in British Columbia they have been digging their early Warba variety for 3 weeks now.

In terms of weather events, Manitoba did have a hard frost on May 27 which froze off emerged plants, and Alberta had a hailstorm last week which defoliated 2,000 acres.

The crop has good potential, but we are going to need to work hard, to clean up the old crop at a later than normal date, as the new crop transitions in on schedule.

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