



POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

Crop Update June 23, 2021

The potato crop in Canada is in varying stages - from emergence to touching between rows. Potato growers everywhere are optimistic for the good growing conditions needed to move this crop in its early life stages. Here is a summary of how the crop looks across the country:

Prince Edward Island:

A lot of the Island crop is at emergence with nice even stands being reported. Growing conditions are excellent and the crop is in better shape than this time one year ago. In-province surveys indicate planted acreage could be up slightly, in the 1% range (1,000 acres). Industry is pleased that the provincial government has removed the moratorium on deep water wells for agricultural use. The restriction will not be relaxed in time for this year's crop but will have benefit for the one in 2022. Old crop is in short supply making it difficult to control movement with such a small inventory.

New Brunswick:

The crop went in early with some growers reporting their finishing date in 2021, to be ahead of their starting date last year. Emergence has been good and although conditions have been dry, they are not yet affecting the growth of the crop, as canopies begin to fill in exposed soil area. Planted acreage will be up, with the Formed Product Line in the McCain expansion requiring a minimum of 3,000-4,000 additional acres. Entities in neighboring states have also looked to increase their volume requirements. Some chip growers have shifted volume towards fryer contracts. Old crop is in very limited quantity in few hands. Fresh quality depends on the lot as it nears the end of storage season. Fresh prices have been steady with strong

upward movement on 8oz and up, driven by increased count carton prices in the US. Processing inventory will likely be prioritized for the specialty production line allowing it to become fully operational in July.

Quebec:

Spring came early to Quebec with ideal conditions for planting and emergence. Yield wise, the crop looks great overall, although it has been a bit drier in the region south of Montreal. Planted acreage will be up for processing and will also see a slight increase on the fresh side. Old crop has tightened up in the last two weeks due to increased demand and should allow for perfect timing, as old crop transitions to the new one. New potatoes have been listed in retail grocer flyers for start-up harvest on July 5th and full volume of 10lbbers available by July 8th. With orderly marketing well established, Quebec producers expect to start new crop at \$4.00/10lb. Other than potatoes, the other thing Quebecers are most proud of, is their “Montreal Canadiens”. At press time their hockey team just needs one more game to take home the Stanley Cup! Go Habs Go!

Ontario:

Spring came early with warm temperatures allowing for ideal planting conditions. Some of the very early potatoes planted in April were nipped by frost but have since recovered. The crop overall looks very good, but the province is very dry and in need of rain. Growers with irrigation have rarely seen such an early start to the job of adding water, with many in their third or fourth pass already. Old crop will run right up to new crop deliveries. The new crop harvest is expected to begin July 10-15. Acreage is expected to be flat this year.

Manitoba:

Fresh potatoes have been experiencing very dry conditions in Manitoba for 3-4 years now. This year it has been dry, with no rain for two weeks now, and none in the forecast for 10 days. Some reservoirs are 35%-40% full while others are empty. As a result, crop potential is likely average at best. Total fresh acreage is similar

although down a couple hundred of reds. Old crop red potatoes had been long, but demand picked up substantially in the last two weeks and will clean up easily in July. This increased demand and movement also moved pricing up \$2.00/cwt. on U.S. destinations.

Processing potatoes are also thirsty in Manitoba with crops struggling for moisture. Growers in some areas are using up their available water to hasten row closure and minimize evaporation losses from the soil surface. Moisture limitation will challenge yield potential. Industry planting surveys to date show an increase of 5,500 acres within the province, however this will not be quite enough to meet processing plant requirements. Old crop will continue to be imported into the province until the end of July, and processors will be starting new crop in mid-August.

Saskatchewan:

Growers experienced an early spring and good planting conditions. The province is quite dry and although they do have more irrigation, water supplies are some of the lowest in memory. Planted acreage is expected to be up slightly, around 200 acres.

Alberta:

Planting was completed in nice time this year and subsequent emergence has been even with strong plants. However, it has been extremely dry in the province, with some areas receiving only an inch of rain over the past weeks. Alberta is not as reliant as other provinces on reservoirs to source water for irrigation, so should have adequate water supply for the processing region, although growers have been busy staying ahead of the crop needs. The seed crop traditionally planted a bit later in the northern area of the province is coming along well. Crops in the Lacombe, Red Deer area were subjected to severe hail damage last week which shredded emerged plants in those fields. Old crop should be finished shipping to processors by July 20th. Some processors are short, while others are long, which may facilitate some swapping of raw product until new crop is ready.

British Columbia:

BC had an early spring with good planting conditions. Growing conditions have been very good and many fields have bud formation and rows almost closed. The first early Warba's were on sale in the market on May 20th. Old crop is limited although there were a few lots of excess seed that had to be repurposed for other uses. Demand for table potatoes has been good with retail prices in BC stores fetching \$6.00/10lb. - \$7.00/10lb. depending on the category.

The information contained in the UPGC Crop Report, was obtained from the UPGC Board of Directors Meeting on June 22, 2021.

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