



For Immediate Release

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United Potato Growers of Canada elect new Officers and Directors

Vancouver, BC – 13 March 2023 – The United Potato Growers of Canada is pleased to announce the recent election of a new Chair to lead the organization. At the Annual General Meeting on March 13th, CEO of Kroeker Farms in Manitoba, Wayne Rempel was elected as the new Chair of the United Potato Growers of Canada (UPGC) after serving several years as the Secretary. He takes over the position from potato grower Ray Keenen of Rollo Bay Holdings in PEI who held the position for many years. UPGC is pleased to have Ray stay on as Past Chair and would like to thank him for his long-time loyalty and support of the organization.

UPGC is also pleased to have Gord Medynski, Director of Sales, Purchasing & Business Development of Dolbec Potatoes in Quebec as the new Vice Chair, taking over for Denis Bissonnette who stepped down from his position this year. Medynski has served as Director of UPGC for several years, he is the Vice President of the Fresh Committee and on the 5-member Executive Board of Les Producteurs de Pommes de Terre du Quebec, he brings a great deal of experience to the role. Matt Hemphill, Executive Director of Potatoes New Brunswick has been elected as the new Treasurer, taking over from Brenda Simmons of PEI who has dedicated many years to the Board of United. Greg Donald, General Manager of the PEI Potato Board and previously a director has been elected as the new Secretary, completing the Officer positions.

"I am honoured to be able to serve as chair of United Potato Growers of Canada. I have been involved with UPGC since its inception and have seen the benefits to all potato growers in Canada." Rempel said after the election. "I believe that knowledge is power and when we provide knowledge of the potato market directly to potato growers, they will be equipped to make better decisions that will positively affect their profits and viability."

Rempel is the CEO and President of Kroeker Farms, based in Manitoba and has worked at Kroeker Farms since 1988. He became the company's first non-family CEO in June of 2002. Wayne is committed to industry involvement; currently he is a director on the Peak of the Market Board and is an active member of other committees including within the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada and the Canadian Potato Council.

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The UPGC is also very pleased to have representatives of each potato growing province as Directors, elected at the AGM, including: Michelle Flis (Director, Les Producteurs de Pommes de Terre du Quebec); Dan Sawatsky (Manager, Keystone Potato Producers Association); Kevin Brubacher (General Manager, Ontario Potato Board); Shawn Brenn (Chairman, Ontario Potato Board); John Visser (Chairman, PEI Potato Board); Rachel Durepos (Atlantic Potato Distributors Ltd, New Brunswick); Terence Hochstein (Executive Director, Potato Growers of Alberta); Matthew Lawless (President, Saskatchewan Seed Potato Growers Association); Kevin Nickel (Vice-President, Saskatchewan Seed Potato Growers Association); Hugh Reynolds (Reynalda Farms, Delta, BC); Cory Gerrard (Swenson Farms, Delta, BC)

Ray Keenan had the following comments about the changes, "I wish to thank the Provincial and fellow organizations that supported us, along with our sponsors, to bring the United Potato Growers of Canada to what it has become today. The idea of a grower organization was conceived a couple of years before UPGC got its start, when Albert Wada a grower in Idaho identified a need for a more data driven organization to be created so that growers could make decisions on planting based on supply and demand rather than on less accurate information. Fast forward 18 years and today we are that data driven association, in continual exchange of data with our sister organization the United Potato Growers of America as well. UPGC has become the only organization that sits down with UPGA on a weekly basis to discuss supply and demand along with crop reports from different areas so growers can better meet the needs of our consumers and customers. We owe much to Ivan Noonan General Manager of the PEI Potato Board at the time. Ivan, along with Brenda Simmons, collaborated with Gary Sloik General Manager of Keystone Growers of Manitoba and leaders of the other Canadian Provinces who realized the value in these two organizations that have worked well together and who represent growers from both sides of the border in showing trends and developments as best can be determined. Potatoes are a weather crop which brings inherent risk, and with today's high cost of production it is imperative that supply and demand be matched as best as it can with up to date information on a timely basis."

Keenan said, "I step down as Chairman when the organization is in good shape with a great board of directors that has worked well with our previous GM Kevin MacIsaac, and now Victoria Stamper, who have both worked hard to bring UPGC to what it is today."

"In closing I welcome Wayne Rempel who will be a wonderful chairman who shares the same values in being inclusive and co-operative with all. These principles have been proven time and again in making this the successful industry that it has become." Ray stated.

About United Potato Growers of Canada

United Potato Growers of Canada was formed in February 2006 by the Provincial Potato Boards in Canada and represents 98 percent of the Canadian potato industry. United Potato Growers of Canada's mission is to improve the marketing of potatoes via the development of better market information and analysis, and to develop stronger communication and cooperation between the grower organizations across Canada. United Potato Growers of Canada has a data sharing arrangement with United Potato Growers of America. To learn more visit www.unitedpotatocanada.ca.

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