UNITED
POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA
LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

HOLDINGS REPORT

March 2024

TOTAL HOLDINGS CANADA

('000 cwt)

Province	March 2024	March 2023	% Change	5 year average
PEI	13,946	16,478	-15.4%	16,554
NB	6,064	7,660	-20.8%	8,261
Quebec	5,978	6,212	-3.8%	7,216
Ontario	3,850	3,422	12.5%	4,088
Manitoba	14,493	10,950	32.4%	13,209
Alberta	19,186	13,189	45.5%	15,298
BC	508	292	74.0%	559
TOTAL	**64,025**	**58,203**	**10.0%**	**65,185**

Source: AAFC - Infohort

Total Canadian Potato Storage Holdings on March 1, 2024 totaled 64,025 million cwt which is up 10% over March 2023 but slightly below the five year average. We have somewhat of a repeat this month with Quebec, PEI and New Brunswick all showing lower stocks compared to the same month last year mostly due to good disappearance in February and higher cull rates in the eastern provinces due to the wet growing season and harvest causing some issues in storage. The higher stock levels seem to still be in the western provinces and mainly in the processing sector. Although Ontario, Alberta and BC, as well as Quebec this month, did show higher stocks in the Fresh sector, in overall numbers fresh inventories are down 5.9% for the country and the sector seems to be fairly well balanced for this time of year.

There continues to be movement of processing potatoes from west to east to use up the surplus and balance out shortages in some of the eastern provinces.

The seed sector saw a decrease in overall stocks similar to last month 2.2%, with higher stock levels of seed in Alberta, PEI and Ontario offset by reduced inventories in Quebec, Manitoba, New Brunswick and British Columbia.

HOLDINGS REPORT - MARCH 2024

FRESH SECTOR

The Fresh sector is showing a very similar month of March when compared to February, with a 5.9% decline in fresh inventories as of March 1st vs. last year at this time; 690,000 cwt fewer potatoes in holdings vs. March 2023, compared to a 777,000 cwt difference in February year over year. It is important to note however that the current inventory level is still over the 5 year average for the sector and actually the third largest March inventory apart from 2023 and 2022. The provinces showing increases by percentage do not have the actual volume in potatoes to offset the lower inventory levels in the main table potato producing provinces in the east. The fresh market remains very well balanced at this time of year and we do not expect much carryover.

Province	2021	2022	2023	2024	% change vs. 2023	5 yr avg
PEI	2,148	4,107	4,870	3,961	-18.7%	3,733
NEW BRUNSWICK	1,176	2,047	1,824	1,518	-16.7%	1,538
TOTAL MARITIMES	3,324	6,154	6,694	5,479	-18.1%	5,271
QUEBEC	2,377	3,005	2,520	2,611	3.6%	2,574
ONTARIO	700	886	657	866	31.8%	751
MANITOBA	968	756	1,065	806	-24.4%	876
ALBERTA	425	524	624	874	40.1%	559
TOTAL PRAIRIES	1,393	1,280	1,689	1,680	-0.6%	1,435
BC	337	292	206	440	113.6%	307
TOTAL CANADA	8,131	11,617	11,766	11,076	-5.9%	10,338

Source: AAFC - Infohort

PROCESSING SECTOR

Overall inventory in the processing sector showed an 18.6% increase when compared to March of 2023, a difference of almost 6.8 million cwt, the majority of which is held in Alberta and Manitoba. We can still see stock levels are down in the eastern provinces, an indication of decent movement but also impacted by higher cull rates and a smaller pile to start with. Frozen processing contract negotiations have been completed in the Columbia Basin and Alberta and talks are well underway in other regions of the US and Canada. Reports are that there will be volume cuts with certain processors which will impact planted acreage for 2024 in this sector. Ontario's processing stocks, mainly for chip, are 8.4% higher than March 2023 and although the pace of movement for February might be slightly down from previous we should note that the province did start with higher production this year, but chip potato shipments were also down in the US.

Province	2021	2022	2023	2024	% change vs. 2023	5 yr avg
PEI	7,503	9,153	10,034	8,397	-16.3%	8,601
NEW BRUNSWICK	2,920	4,752	4,285	3,163	-26.2%	4,024
TOTAL MARITIMES	10,423	13,905	14,319	11,560	-19.3%	12,625
QUEBEC	2,155	2,925	2,649	2,429	-8.3%	2,476
ONTARIO	2,482	2,942	2,564	2,779	8.4%	2,554
MANITOBA	8,646	8,592	7,895	11,794	49.4%	8,755
ALBERTA	7,159	7,211	9,579	15,316	59.9%	9,602
TOTAL PRAIRIES	15,805	15,803	17,474	27,110	55.1%	18,357
BC	-	-	-	-	0.0%	-
TOTAL CANADA	30,865	35,575	37,006	43,878	18.6%	36,013

Source: AAFC - Infohort

SEED SECTOR

Although not as high as the March stock level last year, a 3.8% decline, with just over 9 million cwt of seed potatoes in inventory in Canada on March 1st we are showing levels similar to 2014-2017 and above the 5 year average for this time of year. Disappearance did pick up in February as expected, with the sector moving almost double that of January. Although the overall decline in certified acres planted in Canada is of concern, currently there seems to be seed available, however there have been some reports of potential shortages depending on the variety and/or region.

Province	2021	2022	2023	2024	% change vs. 2023	5 yr avg
PEI	1,856	1,572	1,574	1,589	0.9%	1,697
NEW BRUNSWICK	1,027	1,651	1,551	1,382	-10.9%	1,439
TOTAL MARITIMES	2,883	3,223	3,125	2,971	-100.0%	3,177
QUEBEC	1,066	1,279	1,043	938	-10.0%	1,089
ONTARIO	69	148	201	205	2.0%	139
MANITOBA	1,531	1,471	1,990	1,893	-4.9%	1,645
ALBERTA	2,685	2,718	2,986	2,996	0.3%	2,801
TOTAL PRAIRIES	4,216	4,189	4,976	4,889	-1.8%	4,446
BC	126	39	86	68	-20.9%	90
TOTAL CANADA	8,360	8,878	9,431	9,071	-3.8%	8,900

Source: AAFC - Infohort

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DISAPPEARANCE REPORT

	February 2021	February 2022	February 2023	February 2024	Change 2023 vs 2022
PEI	1,441	4,601	2,277	2,197	-3.5%
NB	1,062	1,393	1,345	1,207	-10.3%
Quebec	938	1,174	1,290	842	-34.7%
Ontario	536	694	641	703	9.7%
Manitoba	1,678	2,029	2,108	2,322	10.1%
Alberta	2,179	2,220	2,386	2,557	7.2%
BC	158	241	96	178	85.4%
TOTAL	**7,992**	**12,352**	**10,143**	**10,006**	**-1.35%**

DISAPPEARANCE FOR FEBRUARY 2024

Total disappearance in Canada for February was almost right on track with February of 2023, only down 137,000 cwt, just a 1.35% decline with only the seed sector outpacing last year. Both the Fresh and Processing sectors were slightly behind in movement in February, as had been reported by several regions with a February that started off well but dropped slightly toward the end of the month. With February celebrated as “Potato Lovers Month” in Idaho there was a large increase in russet promotions in the US perhaps impacting movement north of the border.
Although February is not typically a big shipping month, there was more confidence in the fresh sector that shipment levels would stay on track, with St Patrick’s Day and an early Easter in March to bolster movement. Total disappearance in the processing sector was behind February of last year and there are still concerns about the large inventories that remain and that the pace of movement needs to be higher to avoid a large carryover. Reports are that some in the west could go into September with current storage and will likely have an impact on planting intentions for early crop this year.

Seed Sector		
	2024	2023
PEI	19	4
NB	58	60
Quebec	59	87
Ontario	-	- 3
Manitoba	-	-
Alberta	602	465
BC	9	-
TOTAL	**747**	**613**

Fresh Sector		
	2024	2023
PEI	831	960
NB	174	177
Quebec	574	647
Ontario	201	169
Manitoba	389	235
Alberta	221	362
BC	169	96
TOTAL	**2,559**	**2,646**

Processing Sector		
	2024	2023
PEI	1,347	1,312
NB	974	1,108
Quebec	210	556
Ontario	502	475
Manitoba	1,932	1,873
Alberta	1,734	1,559
BC	-	-
TOTAL	**6,699**	**6,883**