

The FENCE POST

Fall/Winter 2025 Issue No. 11



MANITOBA
CROP
ALLIANCE

5
YEARS
AND COUNTING



MANITOBA
CROP
ALLIANCE

Stronger Together

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The FENCE POST

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ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SUBMITTING A RESOLUTION FOR OUR 2026 AGM?

Manitoba Crop Alliance members can submit resolutions to be considered at our annual general meeting (AGM). Resolutions to be presented at our AGM held on Feb. 11, 2026, must be received by **Jan. 5, 2026**.

Resolution guidelines, template and additional information on how to submit a resolution can be found on our website at mbcropalliance.ca/about-manitoba-crop-alliance/governance/resolution-procedures.

Cheers to five years

Celebrating growth, collaboration and the future

This August marked five years since Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) officially came together, and what a journey it's been.

When the original commodity groups began talking about amalgamation, there was a strong belief we could do more together. We have a saying on our farm: one plus one is always more than two. That's been true from day one of MCA.

What stands out most to me today is how well all five different crop types have pulled together as a team. We look out for each other, all crops have a voice and we're focused on moving all crop types forward. We've built an organization that brings people together and puts farmers first.

At the beginning, in my mind, MCA was mainly focused on research, but I've learned we do a lot more than that – from advocacy and communication to keeping farmers abreast of industry changes and making sure all crop types are supported. I'm especially proud of how MCA has supported special crops such as sunflower and flax, helping



Jonathan Hodson
Chair, Manitoba Crop Alliance

push those industries forward by investing in the research and support they need. The new agronomist-in-residence for special crops at the University of Manitoba is a notable example.

We've taken on work that wouldn't have been possible before the amalgamation. Whether that's supporting variety development, investing in Whole Farm Research, or building new research partnerships across the border. MCA has been proactive with its investments in the next generation, from our bursary program that helps with the financial needs of post-secondary and high school students to ag education

through Agriculture in the Classroom – Manitoba. Having university-aged children myself, I see the importance of supporting agriculture's next generation.

To every staff member and every director and delegate who's served these past five years: thank you. It's clear to me that we all share the same goal: making Manitoba farm families more sustainable. That's what drives this organization, and it shows in everything we do.

Five years in, we're stronger together because of the strength of the team, and the belief that we can make a difference – not just for today's farmers, but for the future of agriculture in Manitoba.

We've come a long way, but there's more to do. Let's use what we've built as a foundation for the next five years and beyond.

As you read this issue of *The Fence Post*, I invite you to join us in celebrating the milestones, people and partnerships that have made our first five years so impactful. 🌱

Jonathan Hodson



MCA at five

Reflecting, celebrating and moving forward

The task was daunting: how do you distill five years of Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) accomplishments into just five statements? But I welcomed the challenge and dove in.

I began by revisiting our annual reports, noting the projects, initiatives and milestones that truly moved the needle and made an impact. That exercise filled me with pride. Seeing our achievements laid out so clearly reminded me just how far we've come in a short period of time.

From there, I grouped each accomplishment into themes, ultimately arriving at five key highlights that reflect the heart of MCA's work: advancing research and production, staying future-focused, and strengthening communication with our farmer members and stakeholders.

Of course, any list runs the risk of



Pam de Rocquigny
CEO, Manitoba Crop Alliance

leaving something out. And while these five impact statements can't capture every detail or every part of what MCA does, they represent what we have done exceptionally well in our first five years.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our delegates and directors, past

and present. Your leadership has been instrumental in shaping our path over the past five years. To our dedicated and incredible staff, your growth alongside the organization inspires me daily. It's an honour to work with you in service of our 7,700 farmer members.

But we're not done yet! We are very proud of our first five years, but our work is just beginning. Here at MCA, we're approaching the future with excitement, focus and a renewed commitment to making every Manitoba farmer more productive, profitable and sustainable.

Thank you for being on the journey with us so far. Here's to the next five years of MCA and continuing to grow stronger together. 🌱

Five years, five highlights

1

Built
a reputation
as an agriculture
industry leader
with a strong
focus on
research and
innovation.

2

Produced
cross-
commodity
solutions
through our
innovative
Whole Farm
research
program.

3

Grew
research
capacity in
Manitoba
through
investments
in people,
partnerships,
equipment and
infrastructure.

4

Championed
agricultural
education by
supporting
Agriculture in
the Classroom
— Manitoba.

5

Strengthened
our
communications
program to
better serve
our farmer
members.

Meet our 2024–25 high school bursary recipients

Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) is proud to support agriculture's next generation. MCA's bursary program is designed to assist with the financial needs of students pursuing education in a field that will benefit the agriculture sector.

Six graduating high school students from Manitoba have been awarded with bursaries valued at \$1,000 each. Our 2024–25 high school bursary recipients are:



Rylan Wubbe
La Riviere, MB



Peyton Tolton
Kenton, MB



Taylor Unrau
Douglas, MB



Caroline Anne McConnell
Cromer, MB



Dane Bergen
Carman, MB



Elizabeth Woodason
Erickson, MB

Congratulations to all the recipients!

JOIN US!

Manitoba's top production and farm management conference returns

CropConnect Conference 2026

February 11 & 12

Proudly brought to you by:

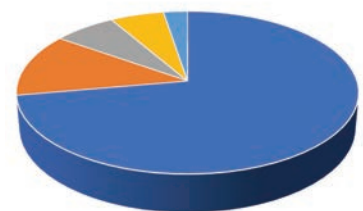
- Manitoba Canola Growers
- Manitoba Forage Seed Growers
- Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers
- Manitoba Oat Growers Association
- Manitoba Seed Growers' Association
- Manitoba Crop Alliance

2025–26 fiscal year budget

We're pleased to share that the Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) board of directors has officially approved the budget for the 2025–26 fiscal year. This decision follows a thorough and collaborative process involving our key internal committees (Communications, Human Resources, Market Development and Governance), each of which carefully reviewed and recommended budgets aligned with MCA's strategic priorities. The research and production budget also underwent a full board review before final approval.

The board meeting, held on July 15, 2025, concluded with the endorsement of the 2025–26 fiscal year budget. Revenues are projected at \$11,549,548, with total expenses estimated at \$11,154,940, resulting in a positive net balance of \$394,608. This budget reflects our commitment to responsible financial management and continued investment in the areas that matter most to our farmer members.

To ensure ongoing fiscal accountability, the board will revisit the approved budget in December 2025. This mid-year review will assess levy projections and allow for any necessary adjustments, reinforcing our dedication to transparency and sound financial management.



- ▶ Research & Production
- ▶ General Administration
- ▶ Market Development & Access
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Advance Payments Program (APP)

Post-secondary bursary applications now open for 2025–26 school year

Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) offers six \$2,000 bursaries each year to assist with the financial needs of students who are enrolled in a post-secondary agricultural program within Canada.

Applicants must submit an application letter and unofficial transcript. The application letter should be maximum of one page and should include the following information: (i) their connection to or interest in agriculture, (ii) why they decided to enroll in an agriculture-related post-secondary program, and (iii) how they hope to contribute to the agriculture industry once they have graduated and are in the workforce. Applicants must be from a farm that is a member in good standing with MCA, and must indicate the name of the farm in their application.

Successful applicants will be featured on MCA social media accounts and in MCA publications, including *The Fence Post* magazine and *Heads Up* e-newsletter.

Applications can be emailed to **Madison Kostal** at madison@mbcropalliance.ca with the subject line "MCA Post-Secondary Bursary Application 2025–26" on or before **Jan. 9, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. CST.**

Successful applicants will be notified by Feb. 6, 2025.

This is an independent scholarship with a selection committee contracted outside of MCA.

To qualify for a bursary, students must:

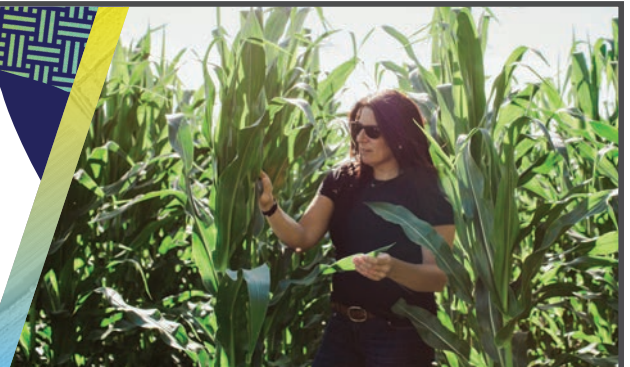
1. Have completed a minimum of one year (two terms) of post-secondary education at the college or university level (diploma or degree) and are enrolled full-time for the 2025–26 school year in an agricultural program within Canada.
2. Have achieved a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.
3. Have an interest in wheat (spring or winter), corn, barley, flax or sunflower crops, or agriculture in general, as demonstrated in a brief, one-page letter.
4. Be from a farm that is a member in good standing with MCA (you can inquire about this at hello@mbcropalliance.ca).
5. Have not previously been awarded an MCA bursary.



Manitoba Crop Alliance

EVENTS

Visit mbcropalliance.ca to view our winter 2026 event listings. While you're there, sign up for our *Heads Up* e-newsletter to be the first to know about upcoming MCA events.





Five questions

with Andrew Hector

Agronomy Extension Specialist – Cereal Crops

1. Why did you choose to work in Manitoba's agriculture industry?

*I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after high school, I just knew I wanted to work outdoors while doing something meaningful. That led me to joining the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba to **complete my agriculture degree**. Through summer jobs and school experiences I found I really enjoyed the work and job opportunities available in the agriculture industry.*

2. What do you love most about Manitoba ag?

*For me, three things stand out about Manitoba ag: the people, the opportunities and the landscapes. The people across all parts of the industry are collaborative and help drive innovation. There are many opportunities, whether that is working directly with farmers or working in market development. There is a space in Manitoba for everyone to excel. Manitoba is beautiful, and because of our **location and landscapes this province is filled with diverse crops, soils and waterways**, which makes working in Manitoba ag amazing.*

3. What do you think are the greatest challenges and opportunities the industry faces?

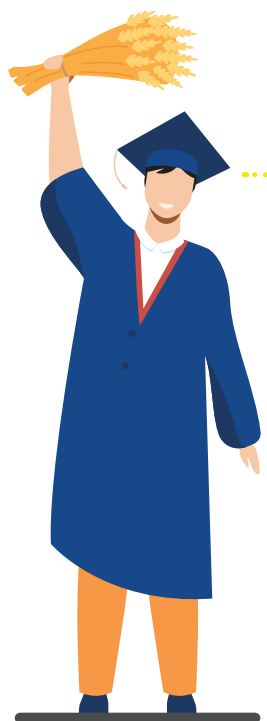
*The industry is always facing new challenges. A few that come to my mind are herbicide resistant weeds, managing and adapting production during extreme weather, and continued market access. Through the great research that is conducted at institutions across Canada and improvement of technology, I think there are many avenues within the industry to tackle current challenges and open new opportunities. One opportunity I am interested in as new technology is adopted is the **expansion of on-farm research** to help make management decisions.*

4. What is your favourite place in the world and why?

*My favourite place in the world is **my family cottage**, which is north of St. Rose du Lac. I've been going there since I was little. It's a place where my family and friends have gathered throughout the years and continue to gather. I have great memories swimming, biking and **sitting by the fire**.*

5. What's a fun fact about yourself that people might not know or that might surprise them?

*One fun fact about me is that winter is one of my favourite seasons. I really enjoy **winter outdoor activities**, but I especially enjoy skiing in any form. Either cross-country skiing with friends or going **downhill skiing** wherever I can find fresh snow, getting outside in the winter is one of my favourite things. 🏂*



Manitoba Crop Alliance @

5

***Retracing the road from
amalgamation to industry leader***

By Alison Inglis
Public Relations Specialist, Freelance

Eight years ago, five commodity organizations in Manitoba came together and signed an agreement to work towards uniting into one organization, with a goal of increasing efficiency and maximizing profitability and sustainability for Manitoba farmers.

During early consultations, some farmers were optimistic, while others were uncertain. Many questions were asked. Would smaller crop types get lost in a larger structure? Would the shared check-off dollars be distributed fairly?

"We knew there would be challenges," recalls Jonothan Hodson, Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) chair and corn crop committee delegate. He had joined the Manitoba Corn Growers Association just as amalgamation discussions were gaining momentum.

"Some wanted to stay small, worried about getting swallowed up by the bigger players. But we also saw the potential: more qualified staff, more research, more impact."

Hodson has a saying on his farm, one plus one is always more than two. "That's what I thought about amalgamating."

For flax producers, amalgamation made sense. "We pushed pretty hard to make it happen," says flax crop committee delegate Eric Fridfinnson. "The reality was that having an office and staff, even if it was part time, was occupying a major part of our check-off income. With the volatility of flax, we felt we couldn't consistently deliver the value we wanted. Amalgamating was an opportunity to do more for research, for diversification and for farmer members."

Robert Misko, an MCA director and wheat and barley crop committee delegate, points out that some of the organizations were already working



together and sharing an executive director, office and staff.

"Amalgamating would make life simpler," he says. "It would cut some overhead costs for the smaller groups. It would free up capacity for agronomists to work across all the commodities — because most farmers do, too — and fund research that would benefit more than one crop type. It would make things more efficient for everyone."

On Aug. 1, 2020, corn, flax, sunflower, wheat and barley came together officially as MCA. Five years later, the directors who helped shape the

organization and those who've come onboard since say the decision to amalgamate was the right one.

"Today, every crop has a voice," Misko says. "By pooling our resources, we're pulling the industry forward as one voice. Together, we're capable of doing things we wouldn't have been able to, or wouldn't have been listened to, as smaller organizations."

Sunflower crop committee delegate Korey Peters agrees. "Many voices aren't bad, but a unified stance is a stronger voice for farmers," he says. "I think farmer-led groups are starting to recognize that."

He adds that growth in sunflower acres show it's working. "Our acres have increased. With the potential in the protein markets, that growth could continue."

Flax crop committee delegate Amanda Ellis says a unified voice is vital, especially for smaller crop types such as flax. "Individually, we might not have the ability to make a big impact, but when we speak as a group, our message carries more weight," she says. "It ensures our concerns are heard and our interests are protected, preventing smaller crops from being overlooked."

Fridfinnson agrees. "The smaller-acreage crops are better served under this new structure," he says. "The staff and board take a balanced approach, moving all crops forward together. This is closer to the reality on farm, where no one is only growing just one crop type, and many issues are cross-commodity."

Continued on next page



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ALLIANCE

Stronger Together

FIVE YEARS AND COUNTING

*We've got delegates,
directors and staff
who are truly
committed to
guiding research and
representing farmers'
interests to benefit
both our members
and the wider
agriculture industry
in Manitoba.*

Sally Parsonage

MCA vice-chair and sunflower
crop committee delegate

Cont. from previous page

Started by the National Sunflower Association of Canada prior to the amalgamation, the farmer-led hybrid confection sunflower breeding program has been continued by MCA.

"Since joining MCA's sunflower crop committee, it's been exciting for me to see the development of commercial-ready varieties, test some in my fields and see the huge improvements over currently available varieties," says MCA vice-chair and sunflower crop committee delegate Sally Parsonage. "Sunflowers are a specialty crop but play an important role in my crop rotation. Having a capable organization like MCA take the lead on a large undertaking like variety development is key for our smaller crop types."

She adds that MCA's impact has been greatest for the smaller crop types. "A greater proportion of our check-off dollars can go into research instead of overhead. Each founding organization was doing great work, but coming

together has allowed for even greater energy and resources."

The hiring of Loveleen Dhillon as the first agronomist in residence for special crops at the University of Manitoba (UM) is one example. This MCA-funded position will boost research capacity for flax, corn and sunflowers, helping ensure they remain productive and sustainable options for farmers in Manitoba.

MCA's strategic plan also highlights the importance of north/south partnerships to foster research collaborations and investment opportunities for special crops. "Research capacity for corn and sunflowers is limited in Manitoba, but North Dakota has a long history of research and expertise in those two crops that we can benefit from," Hodson says. "This north/south approach is new. We have some very strong advocates who, as you can see, have brought forward some great ideas and passion for these minor-use crops."

Ellis adds that MCA has done an admirable job balancing the representation

of different crop types. "MCA works to ensure all voices are heard and puts plenty of effort and focus into even the smallest crop types."

Amalgamating has allowed MCA to take on work that wouldn't have been possible as individual organizations.

"Since the amalgamation, we're doing a lot more work with other commodity groups and organizations in the province, and we've launched (and lead) the Whole Farm Research Program," Misko says.

Parsonage agrees. "MCA has shaped and funded a lot of the agronomic research that farmers are using to improve their own outcomes every year, like breeding programs and the Whole Farm Research Program," she says. "Whole Farm research looks at broader questions on a farm level instead of commodity by commodity."

Hodson says on his farm they are more tuned into agronomic and research updates from MCA. "We explore them more often, we do on-farm

research," he says. "We pay closer attention to the research and look forward to updates to see if there are any trends we can adapt to our farm."

It's a similar story on Ellis's farm. "MCA has changed how I access and use agronomic and research updates," she says. "Being on the committee puts me in touch with the researchers conducting the trials and the latest findings. Sometimes I can even contribute to that information gathering, which is very rewarding."

Peters says MCA research helps with variety decisions on his farm. "The more farmers use the research and resources, the more they'll grow as we realize trial and error through MCA can prevent the error on our own farms."

MCA's governance structure is also unique among agricultural commodity groups. Through crop committees, delegates play a large role in setting crop-specific priorities and are responsible for directing research and market development activities for their crop types. The board of directors is focused on financial oversight, stakeholder relationships, risk oversight and implementing MCA's strategic plan, as well as approving recommendations from the four crop committees on research and market development.

"Crop committees are a great way to start," Misko says. "You go to two meetings a year, and maybe an extra video call. If you want to do more, you can run for the board. It's a step-ping-stone system. What we've built gives everyone who wants to be at the table a seat and a path to get there."

The flexibility and the welcoming culture behind it make a difference. "What surprised me most was the incredibly warm and encouraging welcome from day one," Ellis says. "The sheer dedication of everyone involved, both farmers and staff, has been inspiring."

Misko encourages others to consider joining. "It's not a huge time commitment and there's value in becoming part of the industry," he says. "You learn things you didn't even know you didn't know. It gives you a wider perspective, beyond the cab of your tractor."

Parsonage says she's proud to be part of it. "We've got delegates, directors and staff who are truly committed to guiding research and representing farmers' interests to benefit both our members and the wider agriculture industry in Manitoba."

As MCA looks ahead to the next five years and beyond, directors, delegates and staff are focused on maintaining the organization's momentum – driving farmer-led research, amplifying farmer voices and making targeted investments that make every Manitoba farmer member more productive and sustainable.

One of the biggest opportunities and challenges MCA faces is growing research capacity. "We're working on that," Misko says. "Through funding public and private research, the agronomist in residence for special crops position at the UM and so on, we're investing strategically. We don't have unlimited funding, but we've built a solid foundation to invest in meaningful research to the benefit of our members."

Ellis identifies developing new varieties and expanding market opportunities

as two of the keys to future success. "When we invest in research and market development, we're building better tools for farmers – not just now, but for years to come."

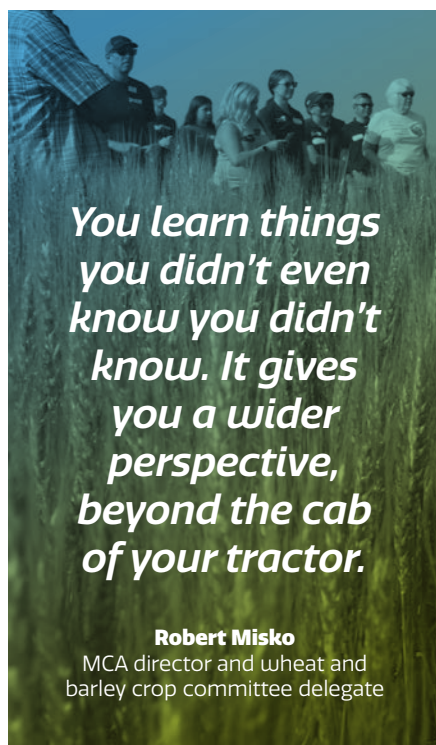
Peters sees increasing engagement with government as a growth area, especially to demonstrate the environmental benefits of modern farming practices. "Building those relationships takes time and years to foster, but it's essential if we want to be part of the conversation."

For Parsonage, MCA has found its footing over the past five years, and this strong foundation gives her confidence in what's to come. "Our vision is to make every Manitoba farmer member more productive and sustainable," she says. "That means using our check-off dollars in the best interest of our members and continuing to build research capacity here at home."

This summer, MCA celebrated its fifth anniversary at Ahead by a Century, an event hosted in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Brandon Research and Development Centre. The celebration featured research plot tours, presentations and a lunch to honour 100 years of plant disease and breeding research in Manitoba. The event was a fitting moment to reflect on MCA's roots, its growth and the collaborative future it continues to build.

"We find collaborators to help us do the work in the most effective and efficient way we can," Parsonage says. "In working closer across commodities, we've built a stronger, more unified voice when it comes to issues facing Manitoba farmers."

With a solid foundation, trusted partnerships and a clear mission, MCA is ready for what's next. The past five years have shown that collaboration isn't just practical, it's powerful, and as MCA continues to grow, one thing is certain: "stronger together" isn't just a slogan – it's the strategy that's delivering real results for Manitoba farmers. 🌾



***You learn things
you didn't even
know you didn't
know. It gives
you a wider
perspective,
beyond the cab
of your tractor.***

Robert Misko

MCA director and wheat and
barley crop committee delegate

Greater than the SUM OF ITS PARTS

Innovative program demonstrates value of cross-commodity approach to research

Alison Inglis

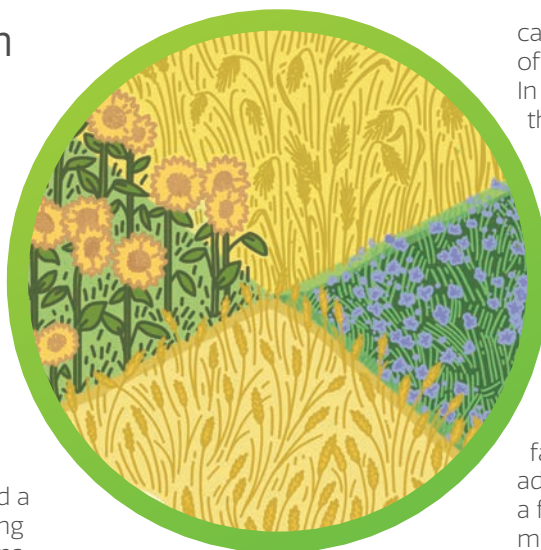
Public Relations Specialist, Freelance

Farmers grow a variety of crops and often face issues that extend beyond a single crop type or growing season. In early discussions surrounding the amalgamation that produced Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA), it was recognized that by bringing individual commodities together, there would be an opportunity to take a "whole farm" approach to research.

"Whole farm research was always a part of the discussion," says flax crop committee delegate Eric Fridfinnson. "This approach to research recognizes that farmers grow multiple crops. We really saw it as a major reason to proceed with the amalgamation."

As MCA evolved after the amalgamation, the Whole Farm Research Program took shape and continues to gain momentum. The program takes a cross-commodity approach to research, focusing on issues that affect the entire farm, such as soil health, crop rotation and herbicide-resistant weeds.

"Because of the amalgamation, we



***Whole farm research
was always a part
of the discussion.***

Eric Fridfinnson

Flax crop committee delegate

now have the opportunity to answer some of the hardest questions facing farmers in Manitoba," says Katherine Stanley, MCA's research program manager for special crops.

The formal work began in 2021, when input from Manitoba farmers and MCA delegates shaped the program's objectives and priorities. That year, the newly formed Whole Farm Research Committee put out the first

call for research project proposals, officially bringing the program to life. In 2022, three projects began under the new program, and a second call for project proposals was issued. To date, 31 projects have been completed under the program and there are currently 29 active projects.

As the program grew, MCA recognized the need for dedicated capacity to support the research, extension and strategic development of whole farm programming. This wasn't just adding a new focus, it was building a foundation for how MCA serves its members.

At the same time, Ashley Ammeter was filling a parental leave position within the organization. "Her expertise and alignment with our evolving needs made it the perfect moment to formalize a new role: whole farm specialist," says MCA CEO Pam de Rocquigny. "Ashley officially stepped into this position on Feb. 6, 2023, and has been instrumental in advancing the whole farm vision ever since."

As whole farm specialist, Ammeter works with various groups and committees representing Manitoba farmers, including Fertilizer Canada's Manitoba 4R Implementation Committee, the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops (CRSC), the Prairie Crop Disease Monitoring Network, the Prairie Pest Monitoring Network and the Prairie Weed Monitoring Network.

These groups break down the silos separating commodities and sectors,

creating space for farmers, agronomists, researchers and specialists to share knowledge, discuss opportunities and tackle challenges the agriculture industry is facing. "When we're all pulling in the same direction, that's when real progress happens," Ammeter says.

By supporting cross-commodity research, the whole farm approach addresses the complex issues and diverse cropping systems in Manitoba. The goal is to produce results that build a more complete picture and allow for holistic decision-making, rather than isolated recommendations.

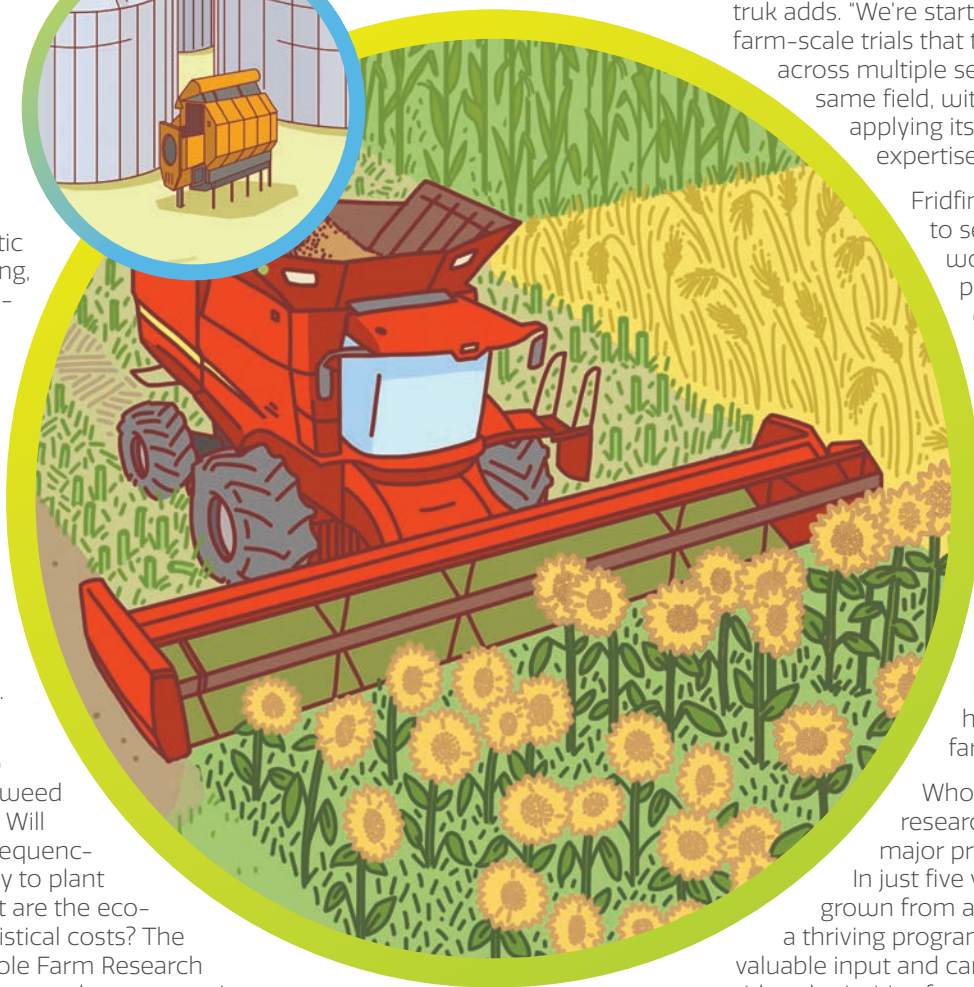
"When our farmer members consider adopting a new practice, they have to think about the wider picture," Ammeter says.

"How will this affect my crop next year? My weed management? Will this have consequences on my ability to plant my crop? What are the economic and logistical costs? The aim of the Whole Farm Research Program is to create the opportunity for us to answer these questions."

The program has also strengthened MCA's collaboration with other commodity organizations, including Manitoba Canola Growers Association (MCGA) and Manitoba Pulse &

***When we're all
pulling in the same
direction, that's when
real progress happens.***

Ashley Ammeter
Whole farm specialist



Soybean Growers (MPSG), as well as others across Western Canada.

"The Whole Farm Research Program is a mechanism that brings us all to

the same table to tackle horizontal issues such as soil health and equipment innovations that aren't tied to a single crop," says MPSC executive director Daryl Domitruk. "It gives us a formal way to call for proposals from the research community, assess them together and build collaborative projects."

The collaboration built at the whole farm table has extended to the on-farm research programs each commodity group operates, Domitruk adds. "We're starting to design farm-scale trials that take place across multiple seasons in the same field, with each group applying its crop-specific expertise in their year."

Fridfinnson is happy to see more work taking place between commodity groups in the province. "Through this program, we're getting better value for our check-off, and research that ties more directly to the problems we're having on our farms."

Whole Farm research is now a major priority for MCA. In just five years, it has grown from an idea into a thriving program backed by valuable input and carefully considered priorities from Manitoba farmers. With 60 projects funded and a total investment of \$2.6 million on completed and active projects from MCA, the program is positioned to keep growing — and the sky's the limit. 🌱

Whole farm, **WHOLE PICTURE**

**HARVESTING & RESIDUE
MANAGEMENT**

COMPACTION

CROP ROTATION

**DIGITAL AGRICULTURE
& TECHNOLOGY**

**MANAGING EXTREMES
OF MOISTURE**



GRAIN DRYING
& STORAGE

SURVEYS &
SCOUTING TOOLS

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT
& EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS

WEED MANAGEMENT

SOIL HEALTH

Whole farm in the SPOTLIGHT

Highlights from five years of research innovation

The Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) Whole Farm Research Program set out to study agriculture as a system — not just its individual parts. Now, five years after the program's creation, research results are making it to the farm. Supported collaborations with more than 10 industry partners across the Prairies and driven by farmers, the

Whole Farm Research Program has grown, delivered valuable insights and is only getting started.

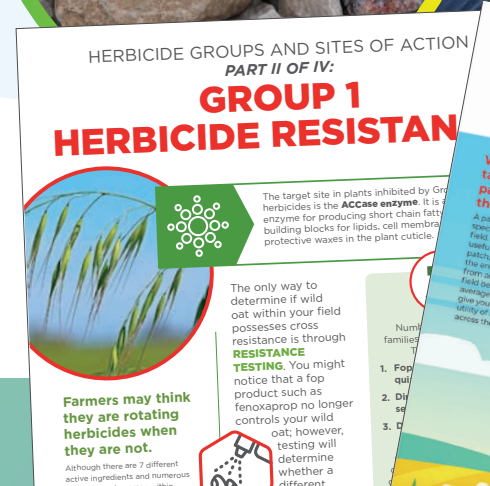
Here we spotlight some of the key findings — from soil health breakthroughs and water management strategies to system-wide efficiencies — and what they mean for farmers.

Addressed questions on cover crops in Manitoba

- Post-harvest cover crops have limited success**
 - Short growing season and/or low moisture availability limits establishment and growth
- Establishing cover crops in-crop with wheat and canola creates challenges**
 - Limitations to in-crop herbicides — more weed competition
 - Cover-crop establishment is poor
 - Decline in cash crop yield
- Winter cereal cover crops can be used as a tool to manage excess fall soil moisture, improving trafficability and maintaining soybean yields in the following year**

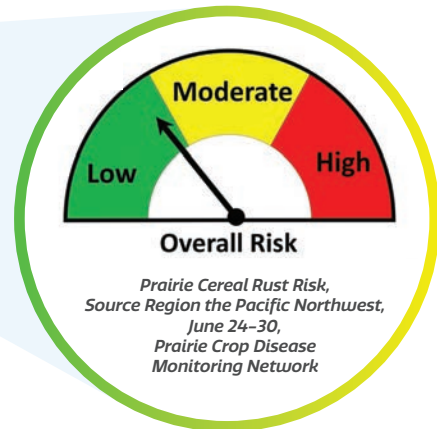
Multidisciplinary approaches to understanding and managing herbicide resistant (HR) weeds

- Resistant Wild Oat Action Committee**
 - Critical information for farmers dealing with HR wild oats
 - 17 infographics, 2 factsheets, 7 videos
- Advanced our understanding of integrated weed management practices**
 - Identifying the critical period of weed seed control for weeds shows potential, with equivalent efficacy to a new herbicide group
- Best management practices for HR kochia (and other HR weeds)**
 - Integrate winter annuals into crop rotations
 - Narrow crop row spacing
 - Increase crop seeding rate
 - Include crops with harvest time coinciding with mid-late August
 - Cut dense kochia patches in mid-August prior to seed drop
 - Cut kochia earlier, and use a post-harvest herbicide to reduce regrowth
 - Pre-harvest herbicide applications reduce seed production by 30 per cent



Testing and monitoring research to improve on-farm decision making and future planning

1. Development of cost-effective test strips to detect mycotoxins in wheat and corn
2. Prairie Pest Monitoring Network, Prairie Weed Monitoring Network and Prairie Disease Monitoring Network



Strategies to manage moisture extremes

1. Established a field scale drainage research and demonstration site in southwest Manitoba to inform best management practices for tile drainage
2. Under dry conditions, wheat yields did not decline in fields with tile drainage
3. Breeding at work — modern wheat and canola varieties have stable yield performance under optimal and moisture-stressed conditions
4. Improved soil moisture modelling methodologies to aid in nitrogen management decisions

Initial explorations of soil health and biology

1. Diverse crop rotations increase microbial richness and diversity, favouring a disease-suppressive soil microbiome

Coming soon!

1. Energy efficiencies in grain drying
2. Region-specific, real-time decision support for fall applied nitrogen fertilizer
3. Tile drainage best management practices
4. New weed and disease management technologies

Have suggestions for the Whole Farm Research Program?

Reach out to an MCA delegate or contact MCA whole farm specialist

Ashley Ammeter at
ashley@mbcropalliance.ca.

INTERPRETING HERBICIDE RESISTANCE TEST RESULTS PART 1: PUTTING THE RESULTS IN CONTEXT

as the sample
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ch, or across
entire field?

h represents a
technique of the
the results will be
or managing that
a field. A sample
or the entire
population and sub-
better use of the
five ingredients
whole field.



Were the plants sprayed in-crop?

Plants that reach maturity after herbicide application are more likely to be resistant to the ingredient used. Plants sprayed prior to maturity are more likely to be killed by the herbicide. This shows the proportion of a test sample that survived to maturity. If the plants were not sprayed, the sample better represents the entire field population, and better represents the actual resistance profile.

Are you testing for every active ingredient available to your farm?

If not, you are not getting the whole picture. Herbicide resistance in wild populations is complex, and generalizations based on one test may not be accurate. It is important to know which active ingredients your population is still susceptible to, in addition to those that are providing high resistance so that you know what herbicide combinations are effective. The only way to do this is to test for a spectrum of active ingredients.

Survival does not always equal resistance.



Survival can be due to proper spraying, late emergence, late application, or other factors. This is not necessarily a surviving population with high resistance to an herbicide. Use a test strip to determine if the plants are truly resistant.

Sowing the future

Insights from the 2025 Canadian Flax Forum

By Alison Inglis

Public Relations Specialist, Freelance

The 2025 Canadian Flax Forum, held this summer in Regina, brought together a dynamic cross-section of the flax industry, including farmers, researchers, processors and policymakers, to address the challenges and opportunities facing Canadian flax.

Hosted by Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) in partnership with SaskOilseeds, the event marked a new beginning for an industry seeking renewal and resilience.

Opening the forum, MCA CEO Pam de Rocquigny reflected on flax's deep agricultural roots. Once a Prairie staple, flax has evolved from its early uses in oil and textiles to modern applications in food, health and sustainable materials.

Despite Canada's status as a leading global producer and exporter, the industry faces pressing challenges. These include market volatility, declining acreage, trade barriers, competition from other crops and ongoing difficulties in variety development and agronomic management.

"Flax is at a crossroads. While the industry faces challenges, there's also

incredible potential. That's why, in partnership with SaskOilseeds, we brought together voices from across the flax value chain," de Rocquigny says.

"At MCA, we believe collaboration is key to building a stronger, more resilient industry. This meeting was just the beginning of aligning priorities, identifying research and innovation opportunities, and supporting sustainable growth in domestic and export markets. We hope it laid the groundwork for long-term success, so flax farmers and the entire industry can thrive."

Designed to foster open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving, the forum began with a historical and market overview from Kade Kettenbach, flax extension specialist with SaskOilseeds at the time of the forum. They traced flax's long history on the Canadian Prairies and spoke about the impact of agronomic shifts and trade disruptions, as well as the lasting legacy of CDC Triffid.

"There have been a lot of changes in the industry lately," Kettenbach says. "We value the firsthand experience and knowledge of those who went through these events, and we want to understand that history so we can build the industry's future. It's about learning

from the past to make more progressive, informed decisions moving forward."

Market strategies and supply-demand dynamics were the focus during a roundtable led by David Simonot, intelligence specialist — crops with Manitoba Agriculture, and Kyle Ulmer, provincial agribusiness specialist with Saskatchewan's Ministry of Agriculture. They explored domestic market trends, producer concerns and strategies for expanding end-use applications, from oil and crush to flax-based ingredients.

Adam Cull, sector specialist for canola, flax and bioproducts with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, addressed global trade and geopolitical challenges. He covered tariff barriers, European Union cadmium regulations and the risks of hydrocyanic acid, which can occur when flaxseed is damaged or processed under certain conditions. These factors continue to complicate export pathways.

The forum also showcased innovative uses for flax straw. Bishnu Acharya (chair in bioprocess engineering at the University of Saskatchewan), Alvin Ulrich (president of Biolin Research Inc.) and Brita Lind (CSO of Prairie Clean Energy) shared cutting-edge research on its potential in bioplastics, bioenergy and

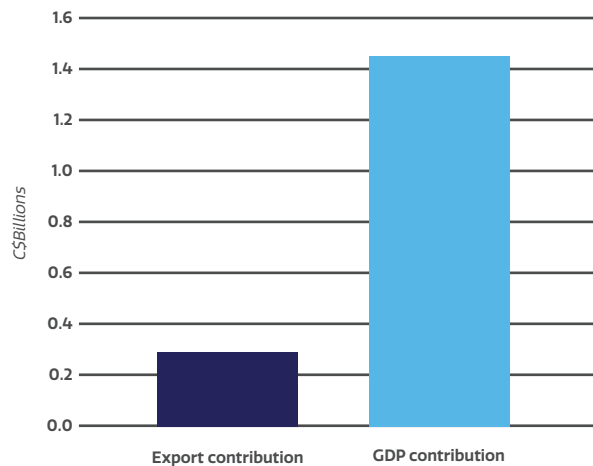
sustainable materials.

Discussions focused on challenges for the flax industry. Farmers face yield instability, straw management issues, limited weed control options and uncertainty around trade policies and market access. The absence of a futures market, a lack of clarity on specialty market buyers and inconsistent quality grading further complicate sales.

A gap in agronomic knowledge is another concern. Young agronomists and university graduates often have limited experience with flax production. Beyond breeding, efforts are needed to make flax a better fit in farmers' rotations, including improved weed management and addressing regulatory hurdles for chemical registrations, such as through minor use programs.

MCA recently supported the hiring of Loveleen Dhillon, agronomist in residence for special crops at the University of Manitoba (UM) to address this challenge. "Establishing an applied research scientist working on flax at UM will not only amplify the research results that have direct impact on farms, but will expose students and the next generation of agronomists to flax as an important crop for Manitoba," says Katherine Stanley, MCA research

Contribution of flaxseed sector to Canadian exports and GDP (average 2020/21 to 2022/23)



Source: Economic Impact of Canadian Flaxseed Sector – Global Data, June 2025

program manager for special crops.

Global competition is also growing. Kazakhstan and Russia have emerged as major competitors, with government incentives and proximity to European markets giving them an edge.

Despite the challenges, there are opportunities for growth. Canadian companies such as O&T Farms's Oleet Processing Ltd. and Prairie Clean Enterprises are investing in processing infrastructure. Breeding programs aim to accelerate variety registration and improve traits like yield and harvestability.

MCA provides funding for several projects within Bunyamin Tar'an's flax research program at the University of Saskatchewan's Crop Development Centre. Funded projects aim to accelerate breeding and develop flax with tolerance to heat stress, pasmo and other abiotic and biotic pressures.

Removing trade barriers could also open doors. Some participants questioned whether strict testing for CDC Triffid is still needed. While discussion continues regarding its removal, there is no official movement yet.

A common theme was the need for unified action. Participants called for a single, co-ordinated voice for the flax industry, along with interprovincial collaboration and strategic investment in marketing, research and

advocacy.

The forum closed with a networking session and wrap-up discussion. The message was clear: the future of Canadian flax depends on collective action, strategic innovation and a renewed commitment to building a resilient, market-driven industry.

With renewed energy and a shared vision, the 2025 Canadian Flax Forum laid the groundwork for a brighter future where flax remains a viable and profitable crop option in Canadian agriculture. 🌱



MCA flax crop committee delegates and staff at the 2025 Canadian Flax Forum in Regina. Image courtesy MCA.

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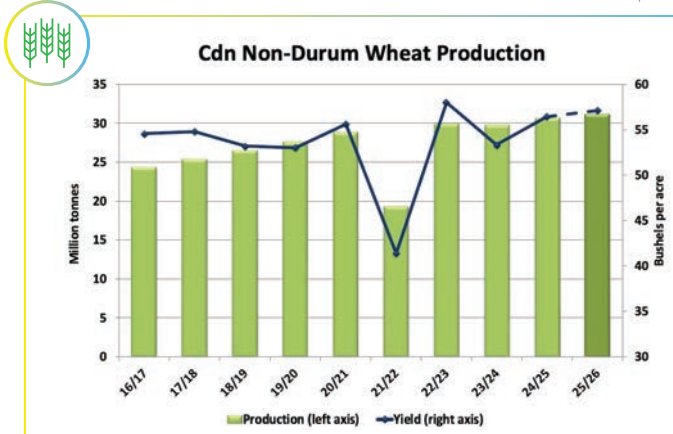
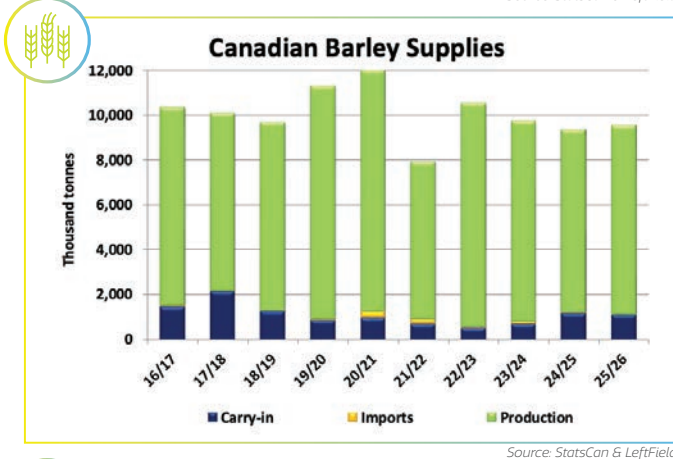
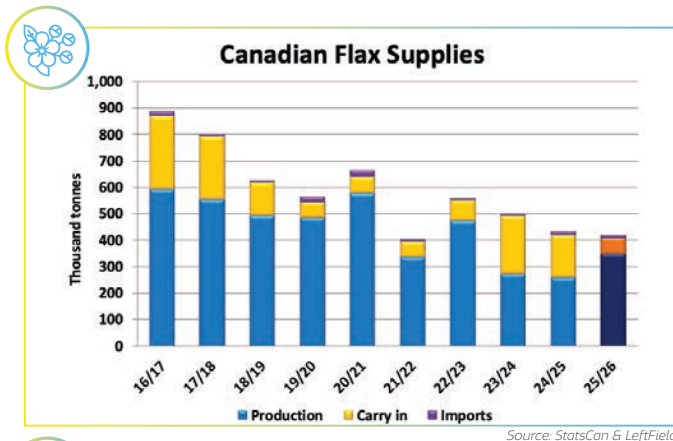
Supply outlooks for 2025/26

By LeftField Commodity Research

The 2025 growing season started with concerns about dry conditions across a good portion of Western Canada. Fortunately, yield prospects improved in most areas later in the season, helped by a much milder summer than the last few years. In general, this resulted in more comfortable 2025-26 supply outlooks than initially expected. As yield expectations increased over the summer, domestic and export demand prospects became more critical. The fact that Canada relies heavily on exports for most crops means the current climate of heightened trade friction adds to market uncertainty.

Larger Canadian flax crop but supplies still modest

Seeded area of flax in Western Canada saw an impressive 23 per cent rebound in 2025 after several years of declines. The 620,000 acres seeded to flax were the most since 2022. Milder temperatures in 2025 and close to average rainfall have resulted in above-average yields, with a crop estimate in the neighbourhood of 350,000 tonnes, 35 per cent more than last year. Normally, a bigger 2025 crop would mean more supplies, but the old-crop carryover from 2024-25 was very low, as high prices helped empty a lot of farmers' bins. The minimal



stocks carried into 2025-26 mean supplies will remain at historically low levels.

It's not just Canadian farmers that responded to the high 2024-25 prices with increased flax acreage this spring; seeded area

also rose in both Russia and Kazakhstan. In 2025, nearly 3.3 million hectares of flax were planted in those two countries, 25 per cent more than in 2024. These bigger crops mean a lot more export competition in the



two key destinations of China and the EU. Farmers in the U.S., Canada's main export customer in recent years, also bumped up acreage considerably. That said, supplies in the U.S. still aren't heavy and imports from Canada will be needed. Overall, global flax supplies in 2025-26 will be a lot more comfortable, bordering on heavy, which will make exports more of a challenge in the coming year.

Barley demand concerns more important than crop size

According to Statistics Canada, Canadian farmers planted four per cent less barley in 2025, but favourable conditions have resulted in above-average yields that more than offset the reduced acreage. Production of 8.4 million tonnes (or slightly more) would be up from 2024, but this isn't considered historically large. The old-crop carryover from 2024-25 of just over a million tonnes isn't excessive either. This means the 2025-26 supplies of 9.5 - 9.6 million tonnes are quite close to last year and appear fairly well balanced.

Export demand for Canadian barley is always uncertain, especially since China is the main destination. Chinese demand will likely remain solid in 2025-26, although Canadian

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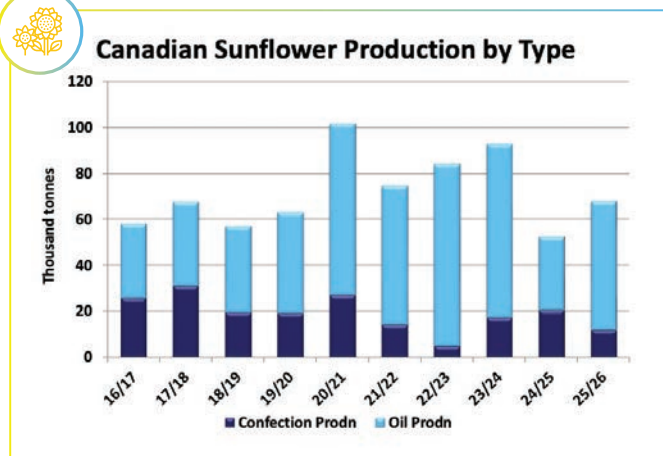
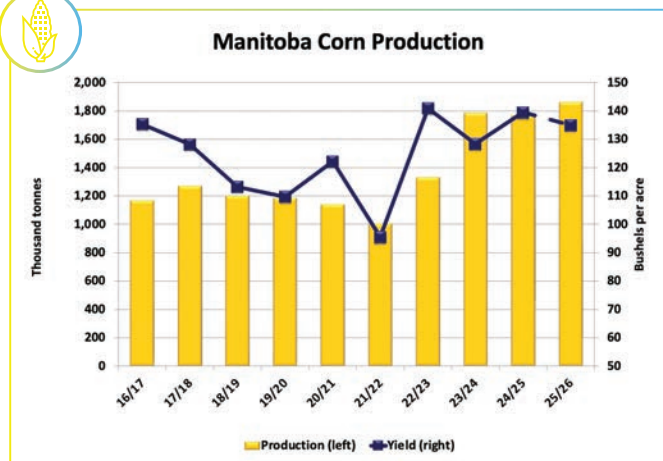
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barley needs to compete with supplies from Australia. The biggest and most reliable portion of demand for Canadian barley comes from domestic livestock feeding, but that usage may be a concern in 2025-26. Larger supplies of lower-grade cereal grains caused by the wet harvest weather, fewer cattle on feed and plentiful supplies of U.S. corn could push down domestic barley feeding to multiyear lows. On the flipside, quality concerns in the 2025 harvest could reduce available supplies of malt barley and provide some support for that portion of the market.

Canadian wheat production likely higher

Our estimate is for Canadian non-durum wheat production to potentially exceed 31 million tonnes, which would be a record, as a seeded area of 20.5 million acres combines with a strong yield that is projected to reach over 57 bu/acre. However, total supply may not increase by much, as inventories were drawn down to low levels coming into the new marketing year. The quality of this year's harvest may be a little more variable than in some other seasons, which increases the importance for farmers to shop samples around to different buyers.

World markets are the primary driver of the prices western Canadian farmers get for their wheat. While the outlook for global supplies isn't heavy, a lack of any major yield challenges across the main exporting countries means production will be sufficient to meet



import demand. Prices in most countries are near the lower end of where they've traded the past few years, which could encourage more buying interest. While it may be difficult for Canadian exports to repeat the record volumes from 2024-25, a strong shipping program is expected again this season, which will provide marketing opportunities for farmers and likely result in low inventories again at the end of 2025-26.

Corn prices reflect large U.S. yields

Manitoba could see record corn production in 2025, potentially nearing two million tonnes, as seeded

area of 543,200 acres was just below the peak in 2023 and conditions were favourable in most areas. This should result in fewer imports from the U.S. in 2025-26, particularly when combined with good yields in other feed grains in Western Canada. The Canadian crop could be smaller than initially expected, as dry conditions in Ontario reduce the yield outlook, but that has limited impact on our local market.

Manitoba corn prices closely track the U.S. market, where record yields and production have pulled values lower. This could set up a season of range-bound trade at relatively lower levels as

the market works through the large supply. There is also uncertainty around U.S. policies in both trade and biofuel regulations, which leaves the potential for bouts of volatility along the way.

Sunflower supplies recover from last year's low

In 2025, seeded area of sunflowers in Canada bounced back from the historic lows of 2024, but still not back to the average of the last few years. At the same time, the mix between oil and confection sunflowers shifted considerably. According to Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation, confection sunflowers dropped back to 18 per cent of the 2025 acreage after a much higher 40 per cent share in 2024. Even with yields slightly above average, confection sunflower production would be closer to the low end of recent history. Meanwhile, the oil sunflower crop staged a solid recovery but still wouldn't be historically large.

The Canadian sunflower market is dominated by the situation south of the border, and U.S. farmers largely mimicked the decisions of their counterparts in Canada. The most recent U.S. acreage data shows a sizable rebound in oil sunflower acreage, although not quite back to historic levels. Meanwhile, U.S. acreage of confection sunflowers could be the lowest in years. Growing conditions in the Dakotas have been generally favourable and with average yields, the North American supply outlook for oil sunflowers is comfortable, but conditions could be fairly tight for confection types. 🌻

A voice for farmers

Reflecting on five years of advocacy

By Alison Inglis

Public Relations Specialist, Freelance

This year, Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA) is proud to celebrate five years of being "stronger together" and putting our farmer members first. Since the amalgamation, we have strengthened our voice through a focused, collaborative approach to advocacy.

As MCA's involvement in consultations and discussions grew, it became clear that a strategic, targeted plan was needed. This year, we developed an advocacy plan to help guide future investment in research and innovation, two areas where MCA has built strong leadership and expertise.

To guide our advocacy plan and provide a clear focus, we define advocacy as follows: **Actively supporting and promoting the interests of our 7,700 farmer members by influencing**

science and innovation investment policies and practices to create a favourable environment for them to be more productive, sustainable and competitive. Relationship building and collaborative partnerships with the government, media and other stakeholders are at the heart of our advocacy.

As partnerships are fundamental to this work, we are members of organizations that have a core focus and expertise on policy and advocacy to ensure our farmer members are heard at the provincial and national levels. These memberships include Grain Growers of Canada (GGC), Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) and Cereals Canada.

These partnerships allow us to bring farmer voices directly to decision-makers. Each year, GGC hosts National Grain Week, bringing farmers from across Canada together to speak with

MPs, senators and bureaucrats about current issues facing grain farmers.

MCA and GGC vice-chair Sally Parsonage attended National Grain Week for the first time in 2023. That year, she participated in a roundtable with the agriculture minister at the time, Marie-Claude Bibeau, where she raised concerns about the Pest Management Regulatory Agency's (PMRA) decision to cancel the registration of lambda-cyhalothrin, the active ingredient in an insecticide used to control lygus bugs in sunflowers.

"Lambda-cyhalothrin was the only tool we had at the time to control lygus bugs in sunflowers," Parsonage says. "We didn't need it every year, but the prospect of growing sunflowers without it felt daunting. I was able to share that reality with minister Bibeau."

Continued on next page

MCA director and flax crop committee delegate Nick Matheson (left) speaks with MP James Bezan (Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman) during a tour of Matheson's farm in Stonewall, MB.
Image courtesy Grain Growers of Canada





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Following the roundtable, the minister's staff followed up with Parsonage. MCA worked with Manitoba Agriculture and FMC Canada to provide additional information on flonicamid, a new active ingredient for the control of lygus bug in sunflowers. Later that year the PMRA issued an emergency-use registration, providing sunflower growers in Canada access to flonicamid.

"It was a case of unintended consequences," Parsonage adds. "They weren't previously aware of the importance of lambda-cyhalothrin for a small-acre crop like sunflowers. It was encouraging to see them act on the information we provided."

Parsonage's experience at the event is an example of how our partnerships allow us to have an impact and take part in meaningful discussions about issues our farmer members are facing.

We also participated in GGC's first Summer Tour last year, which brought MPs out to local farms to discuss the most pressing challenges facing grain farmers. The tour included stops at the farms of two MCA directors: Doug Martin in East Selkirk and Jonathan Hodson in Lenore. Participating elected officials included MPs Kevin Lamoureux



Winnipeg North MP Kevin Lamoureux and Tyn-dall Park MLA Cindy Lamoureux toured the farm of MCA secretary Doug Martin during the 2024 Grain Growers of Canada Summer Tour.

Image courtesy Grain Growers of Canada

(Winnipeg North) and Dan Mazier (Dauphin-Swan River-Neepawa), as well as Winnipeg MLA Cindy Lamoureux.

"Every time you can get a politician to your farm, it's worthwhile," Martin says. "Farmers are a minority, so having them see firsthand what we do, the investments we've made, the value we bring to the economy, and the issues we face now and in the future is important. It was a positive experience, and I signed up to do it again."

More recently, GGC sent a letter to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada outlining four key areas impacting Canadian grain farmers. The effort led to a response from the

deputy minister's office confirming their interest in meeting. By collaborating with GGC, we're able to bring forward the issues that matter to our members and be heard by senior decision-makers.

Beyond these memberships, we have strengthened our relationships with the provincial government in Manitoba. In 2024, we hosted our first From Land to Legislature Breakfast Reception for Manitoba MLAs to showcase what MCA is all about. The reception sparked productive conversations among the 17 MLAs who attended and laid the groundwork for strong partnerships between MCA and elected officials in the province.

Building on that success, we held the second annual breakfast reception in March 2025. Nineteen MLAs attended, four of them ministers, including four first-time participants. This



Burrows MLA Diljeet Brar and MCA COO Darcelle Graham at the 2025 From Land to Legislature Breakfast Reception. Image courtesy MCA

event continues to be an important opportunity to connect rural Manitoba and Winnipeg by facilitating essential discussions and fostering a better understanding of our food system. With a goal of building on these connections, plans are underway for the third annual reception to be held in March 2026.

"We're really starting to see the relationships we're building with MLAs evolve," says MCA CEO Pam de Rocquigny.

This year's reception led to several productive outcomes with ministers and MLAs, including office visits, invitations to key events and discussions on research capacity. MCA was invited to participate at the meeting of federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) agriculture ministers this summer. Although the meeting was rescheduled, this invitation reflects the growing recognition of MCA's voice and expertise.

"We now have government officials coming to us for input on issues like variety development and public plant breeding," de Rocquigny says. "These

relationships help them understand who we are, what we stand for and that we're a trusted partner when it comes to research and innovation."

MCA's approach to advocacy is intentionally focused. As a leader in Manitoba's agriculture industry with a strong focus on research and innovation, we're concentrating on areas where we can provide unique value. With direct experience addressing the unique needs of multiple crop industries, MCA provides a perspective our partners are increasingly seeking out. By focusing our efforts to emphasize our core strengths as an organization, we're better positioning ourselves to influence meaningful change in areas like research and innovation.

The next steps in MCA's advocacy plan are to clearly outline our priorities. Four priority topics have been identified, which include plant breeding and variety development, as well as research capacity in Manitoba.

"These topics reflect the long-term needs we hear from our farmer members," de Rocquigny says. "By being clear and consistent with our targeted priorities, we're in a better position to influence decisions and work with partners toward solutions that matter most to our members."

For each priority, MCA will create individual plans that outline desired changes and who to work with to make those changes happen.

"A lot of specifics are still emerging, but we've clearly identified where we need to focus moving forward," de Rocquigny adds. "I'm excited we're approaching this in a more intentional and targeted way, focusing where we can add real value and collaborating with partners to speak to issues where it makes the most sense."

From building strategic partnerships with provincial and national organizations to sharpening our advocacy focus, MCA's work in this area reflects the power of coming together with a shared purpose and a stronger voice. Stay tuned as we roll out our priority areas. 🌱

Driving impact

MCA's strategic vision for 2024–27



**2024–27
STRATEGIC PLAN**

At Manitoba Crop Alliance (MCA), our board and staff have fully embraced our 2024–27 strategic plan. With support from inVision Edge, we've adopted tools that ensure team readiness, alignment with our mission and vision, and a disciplined execution framework grounded in accountability.

Our three-year plan is ambitious and transformative, focused on driving innovation, strategic investment, enhanced communications and expanding research capacity across Manitoba.

YEAR ONE HIGHLIGHTS

Year one delivered strong results, as detailed in our 2025 annual report. Key achievements included:

- **Training staff in Human-Centred Design to deepen member engagement.**
- **Establishing strategic research partnerships focused on special crops with U.S. institutions.**
- **Announcing a \$195,000 investment in Agriculture in the Classroom – Manitoba (AIRC-M) to expand hands-on learning through its classroom garden programming.**
- **Enhancing our Research on the Farm program through a website redesign and new trial protocols.**
- **Identifying priority investment areas to strengthen Manitoba's agricultural research capacity and long-term sustainability.**

Year one provided valuable lessons in adapting to internal and external resource constraints, integrating emerging information and navigating unforeseen challenges.

YEAR TWO: BUILDING ON MOMENTUM

In year two, MCA developed and approved nine new step goals. We also reviewed our three big goals and included metrics that are both achievable and impactful, providing a clear way to gauge progress.

For Big Goal #1, we introduced a metric: Increase meaningful touchpoints by five per cent. These touchpoints are defined as interactions that deliver value or services, or foster deeper engagement.

Big Goal #2 was refined to highlight MCA's leadership within Manitoba's research ecosystem: Strengthen research capacity for the benefit of Manitoba farmers. Building on year one's progress, we have introduced three new step goals that reflect our commitment to long-term impact:

- **Establishing partnerships with Manitoba post-secondary institutions.**
- **Engaging in strategic plant breeding programs in Manitoba.**
- **Assessing MCA's current research priorities to identify and address gaps.**

For Big Goal #3, we added a metric to launch eight bold investment initiatives over the three-year plan,

aimed at driving strategic growth.

Since the amalgamation in 2020, MCA has increased its advocacy efforts through active participation in meetings, consultations and events. Recognizing the need for a focused approach, we introduced Step Goal #7: To develop and execute a targeted advocacy plan focused on research investment. **Learn more on Page 23.**

Our commitment to investing in farmer member development is reflected in two step goals. Our directors know firsthand that farmers face a challenging agricultural landscape that requires a wide range of skills. Step Goal #8, "advancing management skills and knowledge," provides farmer members with accessible opportunities to build valuable new competencies.

When we build leaders, we build the industry. This statement emphasizes what we want to accomplish with Step Goal #9. We have existing investments in youth and education through AIRC-M and our bursary program. A program designed for our farmer members to build their leadership skills is an exciting initiative we were proud to deliver.

KEEP UP TO DATE ON PROGRESS

Explore our full strategic plan at mbcropalliance.ca. You can also keep an eye out for strategic plan branding across our publications and social media channels to see how MCA is creating lasting impact for our 7,700 farmer members.

We are excited about the work that is underway and look forward to sharing the outcomes with our members. 🌱



Thank you, farmer members!

It has been an honour to represent and advocate for wheat, barley, corn, sunflower and flax farmers across the province for the last five years, and we're just getting started.

Thank you for your continued trust and support — you make everything we do possible.

For more information about MCA and why it pays to be a member, visit ***mbcropalliance.ca***

Stronger Together

FIVE YEARS AND COUNTING



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