

# THE WINDSOCK



## FALL 2016

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Jason Lazenby*

With the shortening of daylight hours and the cold mornings it's easy to tell fall is upon us. Waiting a couple hours after daybreak for the temperature to warm up, and wearing gloves and coats in the cockpit to stay warm are a couple signs the spray season will soon come to an end.

The operators I have talked to over the course of the season have been enjoying an above average year with the normal ups and downs ag pilots are accustomed to.

Last fall, aerial pre-harvest canola spraying in Central Alberta was a relatively new thing; we had a few

producers try it, with really good results! Straight combining saved machine time and labor costs for the farmer, and increased machine time and labor costs for the aerial applicator...perfect!

This year interest has peaked even more than last, and we are finding ourselves busy right into late September.

Once the birds are parked and the last invoices are sent out, it's time to register for the industry conferences! The Alberta Aerial Applicators Association would be pleased to have you join us in Red Deer at the Black Knight Inn! Starting at noon on Sunday, November 6th and finishing before supper on Monday, November

## A NOTE FROM THE OFFICE

With the aerial season ending for many of our members, here at the office we are gearing up for this year's AGM and Conference in Red Deer.

Membership renewals were sent out in August this year to coincide with Conference registration. Do you prefer this? You are still able to renew any time prior to December 31st. A reminder will go out in December.

*If you have any questions, please contact AAAA office at (780) 413-0079.*

7th, this conference is jam packed with more than four (4) opportunities to meet with exhibitors, four (4) continuing education credits, two (2) Annual General Meetings, and one (1) silent auction you won't want to miss!

Please check out the AAAA's website for the lineup of speakers and the new conference format, and while you are there, REGISTER!

Alberta also has the pleasure of hosting the CAAA convention in February! Book your rooms early for this event. Room rates are in effect until January 22, 2017, or until the block is full. More details and information are always available on the CAAA website. I hope to see you there!



# 2016 AAAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE



AAAA's t-shirts will also be available for purchase.

November 6 & 7, 2016

Black Knight Inn – Red Deer, Alberta

The Alberta Aerial Applicators Association is proud to announce the 46<sup>th</sup> Conference and Annual General Meeting taking place in Red Deer, Alberta. This year's event will be different from other years as the schedule runs Sunday and Monday allowing for maximum exhibitor time.

The 2016 program consists of 4 excellent education sessions. Day one will kick off with an opening lunch with the exhibitors, followed by the first credit session with Dr. Brendan Adams Medical Director, Flight Operations for WestJet Airlines. The AAAA's Annual General Meeting will take place, leading into a reception with the exhibitors. Day one will conclude with a banquet dinner and auction.

Day two begins with the WRPF Annual General Meeting. It will be followed by a credit session with PMRA, exhibitor presentations and lunch. The afternoon will conclude with the final two speaker sessions.

## SESSION INFORMATION

**Session #1:** The Medical Science Behind Pilot Error - The area of pilot error, and accident prevention, is a fascinating, sometimes controversial field of study. Dr. Adams, Medical Director for Canadian North Airlines, WestJet Flight Operations and Jazz Airlines will bring his unique viewpoint to this area from an aviation medicine/human factors point of view. It turns out that "accidents" may not be as accidental as we once thought.

**Session #2:** Herbicide Related Topics - This will be an interactive workshop where the group will address the following:

### Resistance

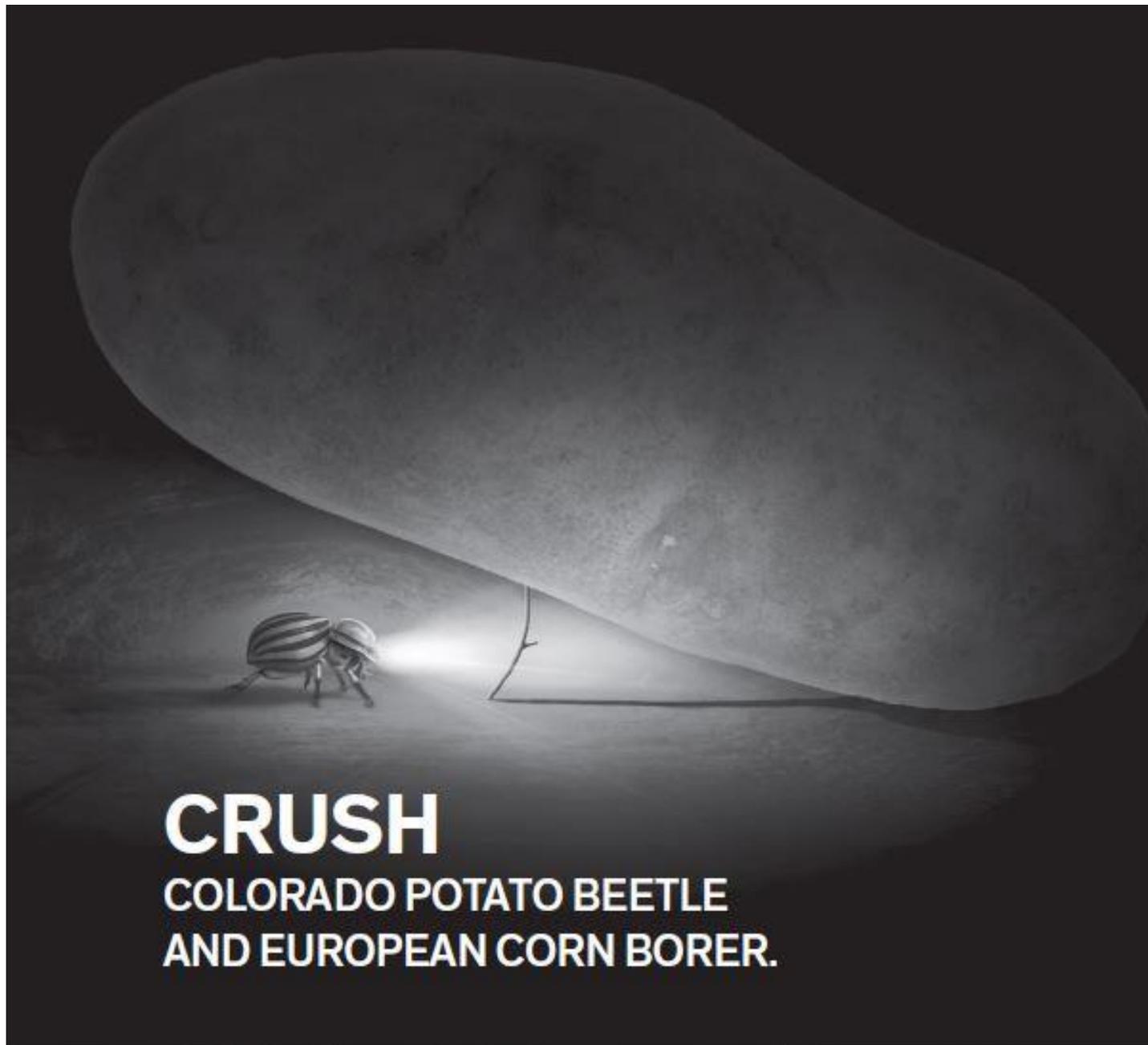
- What is herbicide resistance?
- How does it develop?
- How to prevent it?
- Weeds in Alberta currently resistant?
- What does it look like if I come across it?
- How do I confirm if I have a case?

### Labels

- Why are they important?
- Why do I have to do what they say?
- Minor Use registrations
- What happens when we need pesticides when nothing is listed?
- Highlight process around obtaining minor uses and emergency uses?

**Session #3:** Health Canada: Federal Pesticide Regulations: This presentation will provide an overview of how pesticides are approved for use in Canada and the science that forms the basis of these decisions, and will also include new regulatory updates.

**Session #4:** Overview of Commercial Seed Process - This session will cover an overview of what goes into making a bag of commercial seed for farmers to purchase. It will include a background on canola, and processes in place to ensure a quality produce goes to the marketplace. Areas of interest including pollen flow control, pollination, harvest staging, genetic purity, and quality control will also be covered.



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# THE ENTICING — AND SOMETIMES SCARY — WORLD OF ALTERNATIVE CROPS

**CROPS LIKE FABABEANS AND HEMP DON'T COMMAND HUGE ACRES, BUT HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL ALTERNATIVES FOR ALBERTA PRODUCERS**

*By Madeleine Baerg – Alberta Farmer Express*

*Published: October 4, 2016*

Farmers are nothing if not optimistic — optimistic that Mother Nature will be kind; that prices will be good; and that today's work will pay off a month, six months, or a year down the road.

But for all their hopefulness, only some are willing to stray far from tried-and-true crops.

"There is always some interest in new or alternative crops, but few gain

momentum," said Mark Cutts, a crop specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. "Large producers tend to grow crops they are familiar with given the number of acres they need to cover. Smaller producers might be more willing to take the time to try new crops as they may have more time to learn how to grow these crops."

And after all, sometimes a lack of enthusiasm for jumping into new and alternative crops pays off.

Five years ago, camelina was touted by some as a new wonder crop — hyped as hardy, easy to grow, and forecast by some to be the next big biofuel. In 2010, Great Plains Camelina Company out of Cincinnati, Ohio — the major player in the camelina biofuel market — contracted 60,000 acres of camelina in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The company's vice-president painted a

picture of a rosy future, saying they were looking to grow more and could, even then, handle almost twice as many acres.

Unfortunately, time proved him wrong. Many producers complained camelina is, in fact, very difficult to grow. And a combination of weather and bad luck (flooding, rail transport backups, and a promised but undelivered biofuel blender's tax credit) caused Great Plains to renege on contracts for camelina grown in 2010 and 2011.

Though producers eventually received most or all of the monies owing, their enthusiasm for the new crop was understandably dampened. Today, camelina has virtually dropped entirely off Alberta's cropping map.

*Continued on next page*

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“Five or six years ago, we got some questions at the crop info centre on camelina,” said Cutts, “Now, nothing.”

Pennycress, another potential biofuel, may suffer a similar fate.

“Some people are dabbling in it up in the Peace region but they aren’t getting too far,” he said.

But some novel crops are making headway.

Quinoa, mostly contracted to companies in Saskatchewan and Ontario, is gaining limited acreage.

And new and improved varieties of fababean and soybeans are drawing second looks because of their low

disease incidence and pest problems, easy harvestability, and good potential profitability. Fababean acreage in Alberta rose from 6,000 acres in 2012 to about 80,000 acres in 2014 before levelling off this year.

But the biggest success story in recent years has been spring-seeded legumes. Lentils, in particular, made a huge jump in acreage in 2016.

“The value of lentils was very, very high last year so a lot of people jumped into them,” said Cutts.

That being said, this year’s wet weather in many key lentil-growing areas will likely spell limited success for this crop this year. But interest in pulses remains high, and some are planting peas and lentils in the fall. Fall planting results in less spring planting pressure and a wider fall harvest window since fall-seeded crops are harvested earlier. As well, research plots have produced as much as 39 per cent more yield than spring-seeded crops — although high management requirements have limited uptake among producers so far.

And a changing climate and improving genetics mean some crops once considered impossible to grow in more northern climates now bring farmers success in areas they’ve never been grown before. Corn, for example, is now fairly common in central Alberta, and winter wheat is being grown right up into the Peace Country.

And finally hemp, banned as a crop in Canada from 1938 to 1998, is making a comeback in Albertan fields. Acreage peaked at 108,000 acres in 2014 before

falling to 76,000 acres this year. The drop is the result of a shortage of processing capacity, and not because of a lack of producer interest, according to Jan Slaski, a crop scientist with Alberta Innovates Technology Futures.

“There is huge interest among producers but because this crop is grown 99 per cent on contract, we need the processors to get up and running,” he said. “We’re in the transition phase right now. More processors are coming on stream now.”

There are also more markets for hemp products, he said.

“Until last year, hemp was grown almost exclusively for seed for human consumption. But fibre demand is about to become reality and explode. Substantial acres of fibre-specific varieties will be necessary.”

There is also potential for non-narcotic cannabinoids which are being tested for a range of medical conditions, including epilepsy and diabetes. A single hectare of hemp can produce between one and three kilograms of pharmaceutical-grade non-narcotic cannabinoids, with each kilogram currently valued at \$20,000. However, this is a federally regulated product and is not yet legal to produce in Canadian fields.



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