



2011... A Challenging Year

2011 has been another challenging year for Manitoba producers. Unseeded acres due to excess moisture, a wet spring, followed by heat and drought, and the ongoing Triffid issue all contributed to a decrease in flax production.

Special points of interest:

- Testing
- HT Flax
- Flax Genome
- MFGA AGM



Estimates indicate that flax acres decreased from 153,000 in 2010 to 78,000 acres in 2011 with yield averaging around 20 bushels per acre.

Flax prices have come under some pressure because of increased production in the Black

Sea area of Europe. Although, prices have held reasonably well throughout last fall from \$12 to \$15 dollars per bushel.

Growing Pains

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The Manitoba Flax Growers Association (MFGA) has had some growing pains because of a staffing change and office relocation. On the positive side, we can report that our office is now at the same location as the Flax Council of Canada (FCC) in downtown Winnipeg at 465–167 Lombard Avenue. Monika Haley, Executive Assistant with the FCC, has assumed responsibility for managing MFGA's day to day affairs. We are grateful to the FCC for this close working relationship and for the cooperation we have received from William Hill, FCC President and from Monika Haley in expediting procedures.

Triffid Concern Continues



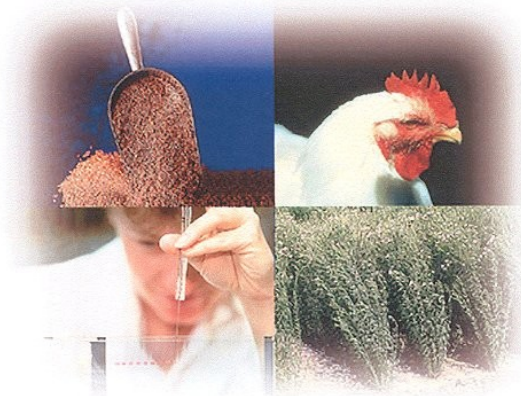
Triffid continues to be a concern and must be eliminated in order to regain access to the European market. In order to eliminate Triffid, it continues to be of paramount importance the producers plant seed that has been tested for Triffid and shown to be negative. The best option to minimize the risk of Triffid is the planting of Certified Seed. A second option allows producers to use their own non-pedigreed seed provided it has undergone the same intense sampling and testing procedures used for Certified Seed.

As of January 1st, 2011 approved labs are providing a discount of 50% off the cost of testing seed up to a maximum of \$100.00 per sample. The labs are reimbursed by the Flax Council of Canada (FCC) using funds provided by the Federal Government under the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP). Effective August 1st, 2011 tests of farm production for commercial delivery also qualify for reimbursement under CAAP.

Considerable progress is being made. The percentage of samples testing positive is decreasing and the intensity of the positive tests is decreasing. MFGA congratulates producers for their high level of cooperation in the testing program and encourages producers to make every effort to eliminate Triffid from the handling system.

Producer Check-Off

The voluntary producer Check-Off on flax continues at the rate of 0.5% of sales. Naturally, a drop in production decreases funds available to MFGA. Your Board is seeking to responsibly invest producer Check-Off dollars in much needed flax research projects.





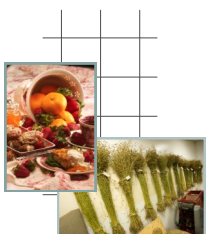
Research

The TUFGEN project receives \$25,000 per year for 4 years. This project is mapping the flax genome which will become a useful tool for plant breeders and flax research. The second project to which we contribute \$50,000 per year for 4 years is a joint venture with the FCC and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). This project seeks to develop a “non GMO herbicide tolerant flax”. Reports on progress are optimistic but the project is still a number of years from completion.

The most recent project approved by your Board is a flax research project designed to increase flax yields through an expanded plot program, screening for non GMO herbicide resistance, improving plant vigor and resistance to disease. The program will be developed and led by Dr. Scott Duguid, AAFC, in Morden, Manitoba in consultation with MFGA and Manitoba Agriculture and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) and staff. Some funding is already in place and further funding has been requested. All of the projects are receiving very significant funding from AAFC which is indicative of strong government support for flax.

Connections

On January 27th & 28th, 2011 the MFGA Board engaged in a “Strategic Planning Workshop”. This has led to a Strategic Framework with a Vision, Mission and Value Statement including short and long-term goals for our Association. In addition to attending regular Board meetings, the MFGA Board has also connected with related organizations. Two members represent MFGA on the FCC Board and two members attended the Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission (SFDC) AGM. We have invited FCC and SFDC to the MFGA AGM and we are planning to participate in the Flax Institute meetings in Fargo, ND., March 29th & 30th, 2012. Our flax booth at MB Ag Days in Brandon continues to provide an excellent opportunity to communicate with growers, consumers and students. These are all ways in which MFGA interconnects to inform and be informed about developments in our industry.



Flax is a very beneficial crop for Human Health and is an environmentally friendly product useful for Heating and Industrial applications!



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Coming Soon!!

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Cropping System

Flax occupies an important role as a break in the rotation in our intensive cropping system. Current research will help to make flax a more profitable option for Manitoba and western Canadian producers. The Triffid issue will be overcome.

Flax is a less expensive input crop compared to some of the other crops we grow.

Let's all think seriously about including flax in our rotation for 2012!



Finally, You're Invited to Attend

MFGA's

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, March 15th, 2012 (CDT) @ 10:00 a.m.
Canada/Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre
North of Carberry, Junction of Highway 1 and 5
Carberry, MB.

*An interesting program is planned as well as a
short Business Meeting!*

Agenda is included with this Newsletter!

See you in Carberry!