



Manitoba Flax Growers Association

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Special points of interest:

- Flax Curriculum 4-8
- www.mfga.ca
- Producer Focus Group
- MFGA Annual General Meeting

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A message from our Chair!

The Manitoba Flax Growers Association (MFGA) is concluding a busy and successful year. As readers will note, we are funding three important research projects and actively pursuing other worthwhile research opportunities.

Your Board and Management continues to search for new ways to promote flax and address any issues that pertain to flax production and marketing in our province and country. I want to thank the board members and our staff person Monika for their dedication and hard work through the past year. I especially want to mention our two board members that joined in 2012; Brad Rasmussen, Starbuck and John Dueck, Horndean. They have quickly taken an active part in all board activities and are real contributors to MFGA.

I want to thank all members for their continued support of MFGA. Your board is making every effort to make best use of all check-off funds. We hope you will attend your Annual General Meeting in Brandon, MB., on January 14th, 2013 (go to www.mfga.ca for more information). This is an opportunity for you to both learn about issues of interest to flax growers and to offer direction for future efforts and direction. This is a new location and date for us and we sincerely hope it will be convenient and accessible.

Introducing www.mfga.ca

MFGA launched their new website on September 28th, 2012.

The main features of www.mfga.ca are: Farmers' Resources including Current Flax Prices, Selling Production and Tax Credits; Flax Resources such as GMO Flax Updates, Research and Agronomics, Human and Animal Nutrition; Newline including Re-Constituted Flax Seed, Market Variety Report and the MFGA Annual General Meeting.

Our new website is meant to provide timely and valuable information to ensure that farmers have the resources they need to profit from their flax crops.

Mission

To improve the economic returns and agronomic benefits to Manitoba flax growers through research, promotion and communication.

Vision

A sustainable, vibrant industry with premium prices so Manitoba farmers choose to grow flax.



Re-constituted Event-Free Flax

Over the past two years the flax industry has experienced a significant drop in exports and acreage as a result of weather events and the detection in fall 2009 of the presence of genetically modified (GM) “Triffid” seed in shipments to the EU. The EU is a very GM adverse market and will not allow imports of such products.



The industry, in partnership with AAFC, is working very diligently to address these problems including the initiation in 2009 of a significant testing and monitoring protocol to remove GM Triffid from the seed supply in Canada. These efforts focus on both grain and seed and have worked to reduce both the frequency and level of presence of Triffid. However, the level will not move to zero unless a zero source seed is used across the industry. While there are no guarantees, the industry believes this is the best path to remove CDC Triffid from the Canadian system and start to rebuild Canada as the global leader in flax production and export.

SeCan is a major player in the Canadian seed industry and an important player in the renewal of the flax industry. They have been involved in the agricultural sector since 1976 and represent between 85% - 90% of the flax varieties sold in the Canadian market. Because of their history and experience, SeCan is able to bring new flax varieties with improved features into commercial production more quickly. This is a benefit to the entire sector, including farmers, millers and other processors, consumers and exporters.

Through SeCan’s network of more than 700 member companies (the majority who are seed growers/processors) seed supplies of new varieties can be increased rapidly, cost effectively and grown as close as possible to the farm customer. Where beneficial, SeCan uses winter multiplication to either increase product availability or speed a variety to market.

SeCan is leading the effort to re-constitute GM free flax breeder seed. Seed is in the process of being multiplied using a strict production and processing protocol. The certified seed will be ready for sale to customers in the fall of 2013 for planting in the 2014 season. Reconstituted supplies of CDC Bethune, CDC Sorrel and new products CDC Sanctuary and CDC Glas will be available in 2014. To differentiate the new seed lots from past seed supplies, a “14” designation will be added to the previously released varieties (i.e. CDC Bethune-14 and CDC Sorrel-14). This designation will not be necessary for CDC Sanctuary or CDC Glas since this will be the first commercial sales of these varieties.

SeCan is encouraging flax producers to replace their existing seed stocks for the 2014 season so that all traces of Triffid can be flushed from the seed supply. During the 2014 season flax producers need to be encouraged to deliver all previous seed stocks and grain inventory to the elevator system to minimize the chance of cross contamination of new flax supplies with old inventory. It will be especially critical to draw out all remnant grain supplies from previous flax production years that may or may not have been tested for Triffid. A small lot of Triffid, Normandy or Mons entering the system in 2015 or beyond may cause all efforts in this process to be lost.

As long as stock seed is planted in the spring of 2013, SeCan can still have enough certified seed to plant over one million acres of flax with re-constituted breeder seed; however, SeCan members need some encouragement to get all the acres in the ground i.e. they need to know that there will be a market for the seed if they grow it.

To encourage SeCan members to grow as many acres as possible SeCan will communicate all Flax Council initiatives to SeCan members so they are fully aware of the communication efforts to the flax industry. Flax producers are encouraged to talk to a SeCan member to express interest in purchasing seed supply for 2014. If producers grow the seed in 2013 there will be a reasonable market in 2014.

SeCan can supply a list of growers that plan to have re-constituted seed available for 2014. Please contact SeCan at 800-764-5487 or visit their website at www.secan.com



Research

“Value Added Flax Production in Manitoba through Breeding and Agronomy and Pathology Research”

This project will build upon a successful foundation in flax breeding, agronomy and pathology researchers at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Research Centres in Manitoba (Brandon, Morden and Winnipeg) that develop new varieties that will meet customer demands and perform well for growers, and processors of Manitoba. It will build upon using facilities within Manitoba such as the

Diversification Centres throughout the province of Manitoba and augment research already ongoing at the Richardson Centre for Functional Food and Nutraceuticals, Composites Innovation Centre and Schweitzer Mauduit. It will also build upon the strategic plan laid out by Flax Canada 2015 and research ongoing within Natural Fibres for the Green Economy Network (NAFGEN) and Total Utilization Flax Genomics (TUFGEN). The development of new flax cultivars in response to consumer demands are largely based upon quality parameters such as oil content, content of alpha linolenic acid, protein content and fibre content of the straw. In a perfectly competitive environment, producers have little control over price however specialized flax programs that utilize identity preservation may increase premiums for producers. In addition, better yielding varieties can help producers achieve greater productivity. Factors that can increase yield over the accepted standard are also sought after goals.

Flax production in Manitoba must also be cost effective. New flax cultivars must be able to mitigate the threats from diseases, weeds and other environmental factors and help producers reduce production expenses, while maximizing their revenue. As such, it is important that new flax varieties have improved resistance to traditional diseases and respond to new disease pressures. In addition, agronomic factors such as vigour, straw strength, maturity, height, stress tolerance and yield stability are also desired traits in new flax cultivars. While providing producers with additional yield and reduced costs, the production of flax is also the backbone to a supply chain management system that produces value added products.

The flax crop can be segmented into different uses, seed and fibre, which each serve different end user markets. Although each of these market segments has their unique opportunities and threats, the goal of this project is to accelerate the development of flax varieties for total utilization, seed and straw, through the adoption of best practice technology, agronomic methods and breeding techniques, while being responsive to demand drivers in both domestic and global markets.

Crop Diagnostic School

The Crop Diagnostic School is an annual event that trains 400-500 agronomists, students and farmers annually. A collaboration between University of Manitoba and MAFRI develops a program that looks at and diagnoses some of the crop production issues that have occurred in the past/present cropping seasons.

Sponsorship of the event means that flax production issues and tips are specifically covered. The Manitoba Flax Growers Association has their sign prominently displayed next to the flax-specific demonstrations.

Producer Focus Group Workshop

On July 9th & 10th, 2012 in Morden, MB. your board, industry representatives and researchers participated in a workshop to discuss the introduction of glyphosate resistant flax. This project has been led by the Flax Council of Canada with MFGA serving as a founding sponsor.

The project is to introduce a non-GMO glyphosate resistant flax variety for Canadian farmers. Cibus, a California based company is developing the trait using proprietary mutagenesis technology. This technology will satisfy end users but a number of practical questions remain about introducing the trait and this workshop was an opportunity for producer input. Several issues were discussed including technology cost, fee structure, effect on rotations, weed profiles and regulatory issues. There will be opportunity for further feedback as the project proceeds. A similar workshop was held in Saskatoon for producers in that province.

There will be many issues as we move this process forward, but your board believes this trait is needed for flax to remain a mainstream crop that is attractive to a large base of growers. Any direct producer input is welcome, either at the Annual Meeting, by mail or email.



Manitoba Flax Growers Association

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Flax Curriculum 4-8

Flax for a Healthy Life!" with *Fiona Flax* to hit North Dakota classrooms this Fall now that the new school year is in full swing! This curriculum will focus on flax from field to fork, giving kids in grades 4-8 useful information on flax from health, diet, use and field! Fun games, experiments and culinary recipes in the kitchen will teach students that flax just doesn't show up at the local grocery store and also how good it is for us in a variety of ways. Each learning packet contains an illustrated teacher guide along with CD for printing off student activity pages. To learn more about Fiona Flax and Flax for a Healthy Life, contact: Sheri Coleman, Executive Director of AmeriFlax @ 701-663-9799.



Check-Off Information

The Manitoba Flax Growers Association (MFGA) has been designated as the "certified organization" by the Certification Agency, under the "Agricultural Producers' Organization Funding Act", to collect a check-off for flax in the Province of Manitoba. MFGA is a member organization committed to maximizing net income from flax.

The check-off rate in Manitoba is set at 0.5% of Sale Price. The check-off applies to all commercial seed sales of flax grown in the province of Manitoba. (Flax purchased for seed purposes is exempt.) Straw has a fee of 1% of the selling price.

Producers not wishing to contribute to the program will be able to request a refund on their monies through MFGA twice a year. Refund applications for August 1st - January 31st must be received at the MFGA office by February 28th. Refund applications for Feb. 1st - July 31st must be received by August 31st.

Should you wish the check-off returned, please contact our office directly for a refund application.

MFGA's

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, January 14th, 2013 (CST) @ 9:00 a.m.
Canad Inns, Roadhouse Room, 1125–18th Street, Brandon, Manitoba



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

Agenda is included with this Newsletter!

Register for this event online at www.mfga.ca or call the MFGA office at 204-982-3990

See you in Brandon!

"Stop by the MFGA booth at MB Ag Days 2013"

January 15, 16 & 17