



I.D.E.A. Industry Update - July 26, 2002

Largest Farm Supply Store in Canada

The Wetaskiwin Co-op says opened what it calls the largest farm supply store in Canada on July 22. The Wetaskiwin Co-op is investing \$4 million in an expansion to its current Country Junction facility. The addition includes a 32,500 square foot retail addition and a 10,000 square foot warehouse addition. Across the street, a 6 acre storage yard has been developed with a 20,000 square foot drive through storage shed.

In addition to being the largest farm supply store in Canada, the Co-op says this may be the largest farm supply complex of its kind on the continent. It's a one stop shopping centre for farm supplies, hardware, building materials, gardening needs, horse tack and pet supplies.

Wetaskiwin Co-op also operates bulk petroleum, a cardlock facility and one of the top primary feed manufacturing facilities in Western Canada. All are in the same location. The official Grand Opening ceremony is planned for October 17 as part of Co-op Week.

Farmers Confront "The Great One"

Drought-stricken farmers near Edmonton greeted Wayne Gretzky at the Northern Bear Golf Course Sunday (July 21) , to protest the use of a nearby lake's water for a golf tournament.

The Northern Bear Golf Course, where the Wayne Gretzky and Friends charity golf tournament was held, pumped water out of nearby Looking Back Lake to get ready for the event.

The farmers say their crops and their animals need the water more than the golf course does. According to the farmers, the water level of Looking Back Lake dropped by almost half a metre because of the drought. They add the government should never have allowed any water to be pumped.

The course was given permission to pump 4,500 cubic metres of water out of the lake, which Alberta Environment said would result in a drop of less than two centimetres.

For his part, Gretzky said he was aware of the farmers' concerns, but his focus was on raising money for the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities.

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Prairie Drought Could Impact Some World Prices

Agricultural Economists at the University of Saskatchewan say drought reduced production on the Canadian prairies can have an impact on world price levels for crops such as canary seed, mustard, durum, oats, canola and flax, where Canada is the major world exporter.

Ken Rosassen and Rob Roy have information posted on this topic on the University of Saskatchewan's drought website at drought.usask.ca. The production area for each of the major crops is provided using a set of maps showing the ten year average production by crop district.

The Ag Economists say canary seed prices are likely to be affected by this year's drought. Saskatchewan grown canary seed traditionally constitutes about 65 percent of world exports. Much of the province's canary seed production is in the crop district around Kindersley, which is badly affected by drought. However, the canary seed production area may be more widely distributed this year due to attractive prices over the winter.

The analysis shows that much of the mustard and durum production is in areas of the southern grainbelt where crop production potential is better. Much of the flax area will be affected by drought as well as a major proportion of the canola acreage.