



I.D.E.A. Industry Update - April 22, 2005

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*****2003 CAIS payments fast-tracked in Alberta**

The Alberta government says a new fast-track approach to handling 2003 Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) claims will mean payment of some 9,000 outstanding claims by the end of the month. Payments are expected to total \$232 million.

Alberta is one of the provinces where CAIS is administered provincially. Alberta's Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) has adjusted its verification process to provide preliminary payments for claims based on the current file information of producers. Data will be verified at a later date and claims adjusted if necessary.

To date, more than 16,000 CAIS claims in Alberta for 2003 have triggered payments of \$186 million. Total CAIS payments for 2003 in Alberta are expected to approach \$420 million. (Source: by Kevin Hursh; Reprinted in part from the *AgExpert Express* newsletter by permission of *AgExpert Management Software and Farm Credit Canada*.)

*****Further Payments on Unharvested Alberta Crops**

Alberta producers with unharvested crops may be receiving a further advance payment under their crop insurance policy with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC). Last fall's early snowfall resulted in over 300,000 acres of crop left out over the winter.

To help with cash flow, AFSC provided \$7.1 million in advance payments on these crops. AFSC recently sent adjusters to the affected areas. Having seen deterioration in the unharvested crops caused by harsh winter weather, AFSC is making changes to provide additional advance compensation to insured producers.

Alberta producers do not need to apply for this advance. AFSC is calculating advances for its insured clients and anticipates that all payments will be mailed in the next two weeks. (Source: by Kevin Hursh; Reprinted in part from the *AgExpert Express* newsletter by permission of *AgExpert Management Software and Farm Credit Canada*.)

*****Farmers Paid for Storing Carbon**

The Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association, together with a number of partner organizations, is establishing a pilot project to trade the greenhouse gas emissions removed by the conversion to direct seeding (zero tillage). A total of 210 farmers across Canada (100 in Saskatchewan) will receive payments.

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The project has been validated by Environment Canada's Pilot Emission Removals, Reductions and Learning Initiative (PERRL). The objective of the pilot project is to learn more about all aspects of the carbon trading process involving agricultural soil sinks.

Participation is limited to members of the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association and sister organizations including the B.C. Grain Growers Association, Alberta Conservation Tillage Association, Manitoba-North Dakota Zero Till Farmers Association and Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario.

Participation will be limited to 100 hectares or 247 acres per producer. The farmer co-operators will be chosen by lottery from among the membership of partnering organizations.

Producers will have to practice direct seeding and minimum tillage. There are a number of specific requirements such as no residue burning and no removal of the entire crop growth.

The amount of carbon dioxide equivalent removed (sequestered in the soil) will be determined using the protocol developed by PERRL. Producers will be paid \$11.08 per tonne of carbon dioxide sequestered, with payments differing depending upon soil zone.

On the prairies, producers in the brown and dark brown soil zones will receive \$2.38 per acre every year, while producers in the black and gray soil zones will receive \$5.43 per acre every year.

The Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association estimates that agriculture has the potential to help Canada meet over 20 per cent of its Kyoto target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. *(Source: by Kevin Hursh; Reprinted in part from the AgExpert Express newsletter by permission of AgExpert Management Software and Farm Credit Canada.)*

*****Preparing for Asian Soybean Rust**

As Canadian soybean growers head into the new growing season, they are being advised to familiarize themselves with Asian Soybean Rust.

An invasive disease, it was discovered in Louisiana in November of 2004 and ultimately spread throughout nine states. The disease can spread quickly through the plants and extend over much greater acreages than other diseases, affecting yields by as much as ten to 90 per cent.

"The key to managing the disease is early detection, and knowing what to look for," says Albert Tenuta, Field Crop Plant Pathologist, with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF).

A particular challenge with this disease is that it can be very difficult to identify, particularly in the early stages and could be mistaken for other diseases or problems in the soybean field. Symptoms include small lesions on the lower leaves of the infected plant that increase in size and change from grey to tan or reddish brown on the undersides of the leaves.

Scouting is important and based on what experts have learned from the experience in the U.S., the disease becomes more "problematic" when the soybean plant moves into the reproductive state.

"Something else we need to keep in mind as we often do, is track the weather," says Tenuta. "Strong storm fronts from the southern U.S. where soybean rust could be building up could build up the distribution spread of the spores into Canada."

"Unfortunately, with this particular disease, we do not have any resistance, or truly effective tolerance to soybean rust, that we are aware of," says Tenuta, although considerable effort has been devoted to examining the impact of soybean varieties.

While Tenuta hopes variety selection will be a control option in the future, he says that is about five or six years away.

"Right now the main tool at our disposal is fungicide," he says. Registration for emergency use has been secured for four fungicides. These are pyraclostrobin (marketed as Headline), azoxystrobin (Quadris), and in the triazoles classification, tebuconazole (Folicur) and propiconazole (Tilt).

Soybean rust has not yet been detected in Canada and based on what the experts know about the disease and hosts, they do not anticipate that it could over-winter in Canada's colder climate.

"It is a disease that we need to respect, not fear," says Tenuta, adding the industry does have the tools to manage soybean rust. *(Source: by Anne Howden Thompson; Reprinted in part from the AgExpert Express newsletter by permission of AgExpert Management Software and Farm Credit Canada.)*