



I.D.E.A. Industry Update - December 7, 2005

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***** I.D.E.A. Annual General Meeting and Conference**

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the I.D.E.A. 7th Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Conference on the evening of Monday February 13, 2006 in Saskatoon, SK, in conjunction with the CAAR convention. Our brief AGM will be followed by feature speaker Bill Goodbar, VP of AgriCapital who will focus on the state of the agriculture industry. The evening will close with a social, complete with wonderful appetizers and a cash bar. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. An agenda and registration form is online at www.independentdealers.com.

***** AgCert Canada Sells Greenhouse Gas Offset Credits to Epcor Utilities**

Epcor Utilities, one of Canada's largest electricity producers, will buy greenhouse-gas offset credits from AgCert Canada Ltd. under a multiyear agreement announced Monday. Under the deal, which is consistent with Canada's approach to reducing greenhouse gases under the Kyoto protocol, AgCert Canada will deliver 100,000 tonnes per year of carbon-dioxide offset credits to Epcor from 2006 to 2012.

Epcor Utilities builds, owns and operates power plants, electrical transmission and distribution networks, water and wastewater treatment plants in Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia and the U.S. Pacific Northwest. AgCert Canada Ltd., a subsidiary of AgCert International PLC which was founded in 2002 to produce and sell reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, referred to as offsets, from agricultural sources to industrial companies that produce emissions.

Financial terms of the agreement weren't disclosed Monday.

Under the Kyoto accord, countries - and consequently companies - can trade emission credits. The protocol provides for countries with emission reduction commitments to buy and sell part of their assigned amount of CO₂ emissions among themselves. For example, one country can reduce its emissions more than required by its agreed target. Meanwhile, another country, which is finding it more difficult to achieve its emissions reduction target, buys the excess emission credits of the first country, which helps the buyer achieve its own cleanup target. The system provides flexibility while cutting overall greenhouse gas emissions. (Source: Canadian Press)

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*****USDA Official: U.S. To Lift Ban On Japanese Beef Soon**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is preparing to announce the lifting of its ban on Japanese beef in the next few days, about the same time it believes Japan will ease its own ban on U.S. beef, a USDA official said.

The USDA official, who asked not to be named, said work on the federal rule to allow in Japanese beef shipments is nearly complete.

"We went through the process and we've evaluated the comments and there's just a little bit more work to do on it and it's done," the official said. "We're going to make an announcement within the next few days and we're going to post our rule on the (USDA) website."

It was in August that the USDA said it had "audited the Japanese inspection system to verify its continued equivalence and eligibility to export beef to the United States in accordance with federal inspection laws to ensure human health."

Japan has reported 20 cases of mad-cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy, but USDA officials say that does not matter so long as the country has the proper safety procedures to ensure the safety of the beef.

U.S. and Japanese government officials have said this week they expect Japan's Food Safety Commission to agree that some U.S. beef is safe enough to import.

Japan has banned U.S. beef for two years and is expected to soon ease that restriction to allow in beef from cattle under 20 months old.

Japan was the largest export market for the U.S., buying about \$1.4 billion worth of beef a year, before it banned U.S. beef in December 2003.

The U.S. has reported finding two cases of BSE. *(Source: Bill Tomson; Dow Jones Newswires)*

*****Special Crop Production Higher Than a Year Ago**

Canadian mustard and canary seed production is down sharply this year, but the 2005 dry bean, lentil, sunflower and chickpeas crops are all well up from a year ago.

Today's Statistics Canada field crop pegged the 2005 nationwide total dry bean crop at 309,000 tonnes, a 44.7% increase over last year's 214,000-tonne crop that was slashed because of poor conditions in Manitoba.

Dry white bean production across the country is estimated 117,900 tonnes, while the coloured bean crop is pegged at 201,100 tonnes. That compares to the 2004 levels of 72,000 tonnes and 141,500 tonnes, respectively.

Meanwhile, the average 2005 white bean yield is estimated at 15.3 cwt/acre, up from 13.8 cwt last year. The coloured bean average yield is pegged at 16.3 cwt, versus 16.7 in 2004.

This year's lentil crop is estimated at 1.277 million tonnes, up from 961,000 last year. The average yield is reported at 1,323 lbs/ac, compared to 1,143 lbs last year.

Canadian chickpea production more than doubled in 2005. This year's crop is estimated at 103,900 tonnes, well up from 51,200 tonnes last year. Harvested area is up sharply, although yields were also better this year; 1,273 lbs/ac compared to 1,189 lbs in 2004.

Sunflower seed production also saw a marked increase this year. The 2005 crop is pegged at 89,300 tonnes versus 54,400 tonnes the year before. The average yield is much improved at 1,063 lbs/ac compared to 828 lbs in 2004.

On the other hand, 2005 mustard seed production at 201,000 tonnes, is down 34.1% from last year's 306,000-tonne crop. Canary seed production is estimated at 227,000 tonnes, down 24.4% from the 301,000-tonne 2004 crop.

The average mustard seed yield is estimated at 871 lbs/ac, down from 897 lbs last year. The average canary seed yield is estimated at 1,089 lbs, a significant improvement over last year's 844 lb average.

(Source: FarmAssist.ca)