



## I.D.E.A. Industry Update - September 27, 2005

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### \*\*\*\$100-million for Land Use Information Service

The federal government is investing \$100 million to develop the National Land and Water Information Service that will provide online access to current, local and regional agri-environmental information.

In addition to providing a recognized source of information, there will be analysis and interpretation of the land, soil, water, climate and biodiversity data aimed at assisting land-use managers.

The federal government says agricultural producers will be able to determine, for instance, if their land will support an expanded operation or whether the water supply might be affected by the kind and size of the proposed production.

The goal is to link the information of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, non-government organizations and the private sector.

Implementation is to be divided into four separate phases, each of which provides increasing levels of service and benefits to users. The project is to be completed in 2009.

Proponents say the National Land and Water Information Service will transform the way land-use decisions are made in Canada. (Source: by Kevin Hursh; Reprinted in part from the *AgExpert Express* newsletter by permission of *AgExpert Management Software and Farm Credit Canada*.)

### \*\*\*Approval for CLEARFIELD Sunflowers

BASF Canada Agricultural Products says it has received the final federal regulatory approvals from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Health Canada for CLEARFIELD sunflowers. The approval covers sunflowers for both oilseed and confectionery markets.

BASF currently markets CLEARFIELD production systems in Canada for both canola and wheat with red lentils soon to be added. A broad-spectrum herbicide provides weed control without harming the crop. CLEARFIELD crop varieties are developed through conventional plant breeding and are not considered genetically modified. BASF officials say CLEARFIELD sunflowers will not be commercially grown in Canada for at least a couple more years even though they've been available to U.S. growers since 2003 and now make up 10 per cent of U.S. sunflower production. (Source: by Kevin Hursh; Reprinted in part from the *AgExpert Express* newsletter by permission of *AgExpert Management Software and Farm Credit Canada*.)

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**\*\*\*U.S. Economy: Consumer Confidence, Home Sales Plunge**

U.S. consumer confidence fell by the most in 15 years after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast and pushed gasoline prices to a record this month. The consumer confidence index dropped to 86.6, the lowest in two years, from 105.5 in August, the New York-based Conference Board research group said today. New home sales sold in August at the slowest pace since November, falling 9.9 percent to a 1.237 million annual rate, the Commerce Department said in Washington. A marked slowdown in the housing market, if one develops, may result in an "adjustment" in spending by consumers. Higher energy costs are also leaving Americans less to spend on other goods. The decline in confidence was the biggest since October 1990, when oil prices were rising after Iraq invaded Kuwait and the U.S. was preparing for war. The Conference Board's mail-in survey of 5,000 households was completed Sept. 20, after Katrina damaged drilling rigs and curtailed fuel shipments and pushed up energy prices. The survey was ending as Hurricane Rita crossed the Florida Straits and headed for the Gulf Coast. (Source: Bloomberg.com)

**\*\*\*Alberta Agriculture Updates Popular Fertilizer Software**

Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) has just released Version 2.0 of the Alberta Farm Fertilizer Information and Recommendation Manager (AFFIRM). With 1,900 downloads since it was first developed in 1996, it has been one of the department's most popular programs designed for farmers, crop specialists, industry agents, researchers and students to help select optimum fertilizer rates.

Len Kryzanowski, a Nutrient Management Specialist with AAFRD, helped develop and update the software. He notes that the program is unique since "it allows the user to focus on the economic side -- at what rate will they get the most beneficial results." Users can input a number of "what if" cropping scenarios to help decide where to cut back or reallocate resources to get the best return. With fertilizer prices expected to soar over the next year, these decisions are more important than ever.

Version 2.0 has a number of new features and capabilities. Kryzanowski explains, "AFFIRM allows users to input soil tests from up to six different laboratories, complete individual field agronomic recommendations and economic analysis, and utilize a whole farm optimization approach to allocate your fertilizer budget based on nutrient requirements, fertilizer costs and crop prices."

The economic analysis is based on marginal revenue vs. marginal cost for each 10 pounds per acre change in fertilizer nitrogen. The user can then determine an expected return from each dollar spent on fertilizer and how this will change if he spends an additional dollar or cuts back by a dollar.

Users will find fertilizer recommendations, economic analysis and whole farm optimization figures presented in easy to understand statements, tables and graphs.

AFFIRM can be downloaded free of charge from the AAFRD website at [www.agric.gov.ab.ca](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca) in the Calculators section. (Source: by D. Lorraine Andrews; Reprinted in part from the AgExpert Express newsletter by permission of AgExpert Management Software and Farm Credit Canada.)

**\*\*\*October Member Conference Call**

Our next member conference call will take place Tuesday October 11 at 10:00 a.m SK/AB/portions of BC time (11:00 a.m. in MB).

**\*\*\*Anhydrous Ammonia Training Reminder**

The Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers (CAAR) and the Canadian Fertilizer Institute have scheduled training sessions on the safe handling of anhydrous ammonia. Sessions are as follows: September 29 in Fahler (AB), September 30 in Saskatoon (SK), October 3 in Brandon (MB) and October 3 in Red Deer (AB). For details call CAAR at 204-989-9300.