

flaxfocus

July 2017



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Brian Johnson

Over the next few months the Flax Council will be engaged in discussions with both the Canola Council of Canada in association with COPA and Soy Canada in an effort to examine ways to achieve efficiencies in all four associations.

On an individual basis each Crop Sector has accomplished significant strides over the years with major agronomic improvements along with marketing promotions which have benefited growers and elevated the Canadian brand of all three commodities throughout the world.

In terms of flaxseed, the Council along with our Grower Organizations have worked very closely together in promoting the Health and Nutritional benefits of flax to consumers and we look forward to a bright future in food, feed and industrial uses of flax and in growing markets at home and abroad. The dollars spent on agronomic initiatives have shown major benefits in that we see the average yield of flax improving with the help of our programs along with efforts by Rachel Evans, Extension Agronomist for the flax industry, who has been working hard to promote best management practices to growers.

Consolidation and collaboration we think will allow this work to continue on an individual basis and at the same time we can envision many benefits in streamlining operations and find ways to collaborate so that our strengths as a consolidated group can be fully realized.

With any change comes a measure of concern but we enter into these deliberations with much common ground in terms of the same market access issues, similar programs and the same close association with Government and Industry. One basic fundamental in any discussions is the fact we are all working for the same grower and as a group our objective will be to set aside any competitive concerns and look for ways to provide the best options using all the factors available, including crop rotation choices.

The same can be said for consumers who may choose one oil over another or a particular meal over another based on their specific needs. Beyond that the choice is largely due to price and the market will determine that factor, so any concerns over any conflict of interest between crop sectors could certainly be greatly exaggerated.

This collaboration will bring a new and different look in terms of framework which might include governance and funding changes necessary to ensure a strong multi-commodity relationship.

Don Kerr has retired as President of the Flax Council but will continue to be involved in the collaboration discussions on behalf of the Flax Council.

FLAX COUNCIL OF CANADA PRESIDENT RETIRES



Don Kerr

“Over the last three years Don was active in building a stronger production research program, creating a flax agronomy program with our first dedicated agronomist, and actively promoted open international trade of flax and flax products. The Board of Directors would like to thank Don for his leadership and wish him well in his retirement”, said Brian Johnson.

“Don’s many years of working in the industry was a strong asset and his knowledge and understanding of the issues at hand will be missed”, said Erwin Hanley, Vice-Chair.

“One constant throughout my 45 years in this industry has been change. We have made tremendous advances in technology all along the value chain and as the consumers become more aware of the food they eat this has placed demands on all stakeholders to provide food safety and sustainability. This fundamental challenge will require a concerted effort from all crop sectors and our ability to work in harmony will be a key factor in the future.

Industry groups like the Flax Council will need to examine the benefits of developing a more collaborative relationship with other crop sectors. This may require further changes

of governance and funding but changes are nothing new to our industry and we will persevere as always.

My involvement with the Flax Council has been short in duration but not in terms of a learning experience. Flax is a unique and wonderful crop which leaves a lasting impression and even in leaving the simple pleasure of seeing a crop of flax in full bloom will never diminish.

During my time as President I very much appreciated the passion and professional assistance shown from staff, the Board and stakeholders from all along the value chain”.



FLAX AGRONOMY RESEARCH

The theme of our flax AgriInnovation Program (AIP) of Growing Forward 2 is to “Improve the Competitiveness of Flax through Agronomic, Breeding & Biotechnology Research”. This is a five year, \$2.6 million dollar program that is scheduled to be completed by March 2018. Funders for this program include the Flax Council of Canada, Manitoba Flax Growers Association, Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission and Growing Forward 2. Program management is being provided by the Flax Council of Canada.

The flax AIP has six research activities. They include (1) Pasm-Disease Management, (2) Seed Quality, (3) Mitigating Soil Moisture Regimes, (4) Optimizing Integrated Weed Management in Flax, (5) Abiotic Stress-Transcription Factors, and (6) Genetic Improvement-Drought. Some field trials have been repeated in order to bolster the data set. All field research activities will be completed in 2017.

Research activities will be reported on by March 2018. These final reports will include data from all locations and all years of trials. Valuable germplasm and genes will be identified to assist our breeder to incorporate new traits in her variety development program. New best management practices will be identified for farmers so that yield and flax field performance may be enhanced. The overall objective of these research activities is to enhance yield.

HIGHEST AVERAGE YIELD!

Still doubting flax can break the commercial average yield of 22 bu/ac? Just look at your neighbour! According to Crop Insurance data from the 2016 growing season, highest yields were recorded at 37 bu/ac in Saskatchewan and 38 bu/ac in Manitoba, based on variety and rural municipality respectively. Although environment plays a role, it seems like more producers are becoming aware of the difference management can make. The focus of my activities has been doing just that, getting the message out there. Through our online TIPs articles, field days, winter meetings and social media, we are reaching thousands of producers and agronomists.

One example of these activities has been our Flax Agronomy Demonstrations in Manitoba. The 2017 growing season marks the third and final year of our Growing Actions Growing Forward II co-funded agronomy program. In 2016, the Flax Council of Canada committed to reaching a wider audience in Manitoba by funding an additional three locations, increasing the number of site-years from 6 to 12. Field days at these locations have been a tremendously valuable stepping block for reaching producers in Manitoba. Preliminary data has shown the value of seeding early, appropriately fertilizing, and weed and disease management. In Saskatchewan, Sask Oilseed (SaskFlax – SaskMustard – SaskCanola) meetings have been a great example of collaboration in the oilseed sector. These meetings are held in November at five locations in Saskatchewan and are coordinated with the help of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture.

Stayed tuned to the Flax Council of Canada TIPs articles for timely information on current production issues.

Stay Informed.



Follow Rachel Evans, Extension Agronomist, @Flax_Agronomist

FLAXSEED ON MORNING TV AND BEYOND

HealthyFlax.org has partnered with several media dietitians in the past year to showcase ground flaxseed on morning television. Most recently we have engaged dietitian Zannat Reza, in Toronto and Ottawa markets for a series of morning television interviews with various themes and recipes around the nutritional value of ground flaxseed and how to cook with it. These include:

- CBC News network on December 4th showcasing healthier holiday baking using flaxseed.
<http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/828139075515/>
- CTV Ottawa on March 1st showcasing flax in 4 power bowls.
<http://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1068047>
This was also sent out as a print release which receive one national posting, 11 city pick-ups (Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa...) and 40 community papers.
- CTV Ottawa on May 1st showcasing fibre in flaxseed:
<http://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1119873>

HealthyFlax.org also continues to work with media home economist - Mairlyn Smith. In June, we sponsored a cooking segment on Mairlyn's YouTube Channel - My Left Frying Pan called Grab and Go Breakfast Bars - <https://youtu.be/qFB6XBg0dMA> The video has been viewed over 2.1 K times and that number continues to grow. There was also a social media component with a push and engagement on both Mairlyn's and HealthyFlax's social media platforms.

Promoting Flaxseed to Dietitians

HealthyFlax.org was influencing the influencer at the Dietitian of Canada Conference in St. John's Newfoundland in June. Our #2TbspFlax Muffin was a big

hit at the Friday breakfast with several dietitians requesting the recipe for improved patient health especially for those in long term care. We also exhibited at the event and not only distributed information but engaged in dialogue about flaxseed. Dietitians are interested in learning more about flaxseed and in recommending it to their clients. The main questions and comments we received this year included:

- interest in the flax egg for vegan and those with egg allergies
- is grinding necessary?
- how to store flaxseed
- differences between brown and yellow seed
- cross contamination with gluten containing crops
- interest in hair gel
- general nutrition and usage questions

We expanded our general email list and our list media and social media dietitians.

We also investigated opportunities with various subgroups including Food and Culinary, Business and Industry, Diabetes, Obesity and Cardiovascular and Private Practice/Consulting Dietitians.



HEALTHYFLAX.ORG HANDS AND PANS VIDEOS:

Our hands and pans videos continue to grow in viewership with combined views of over 40K and growing. Our latest videos include a partnership with well-known gluten free dietitian Shelley Case and featured one of her gluten free muffin recipes. This video was released in conjunction with gluten free month activities with a special push to Shelley's social media followers.

Coming soon is Grilled Flaxseed Flatbread featuring a recipe by cookbook author - Raghavan Iyer.

- **Supercharged Salsa:**
<https://youtu.be/GNYLYhAzQNQ> - over 3K views
- **Frozen Yogurt:** <https://youtu.be/oPlnjcAWkTg> - over 9K views
- **5 Easy Ways to add Flax:**
<https://youtu.be/FLk4WGEtK4o> - over 2.5 K views
- **Types of Flax Video:**
<https://youtu.be/dFHpKoHG7aA> - over 3K views
- **Flax Crusted Pork Cutlet:**
<https://youtu.be/aK4fF3OUPQk> - over 10K views



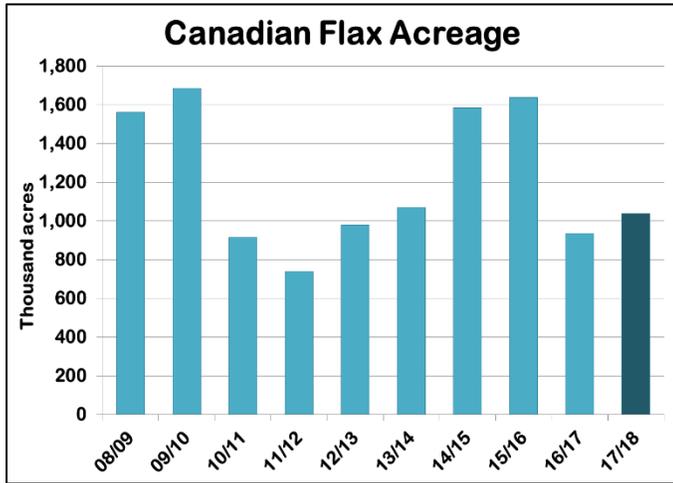
- **How to Make a Flax Egg:** <https://youtu.be/h0lf-M7QTr4> - over 11K views
- **Shelley Case's Orange Cranberry Muffins:**
<https://youtu.be/9D8GDdopsL8> - over 2.2K views.



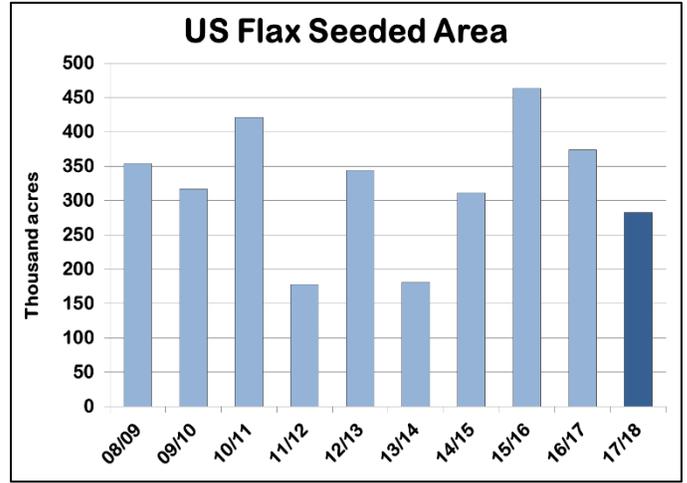
- **How to make Flax Granola:**
https://youtu.be/sUrI_fj365c - recently launched
- **Apple Bran Muffins:**
<https://youtu.be/7F06r5Zqgcc> - just launched



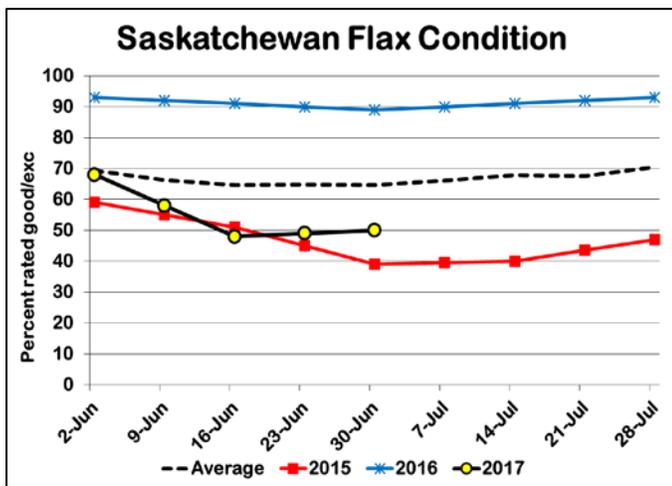
FLAX MARKET SNAPSHOT



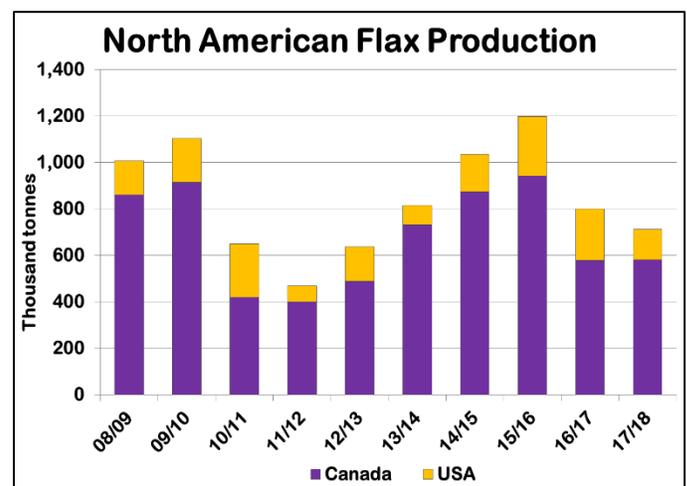
In late June, StatsCan estimated 2017 seeded area of flax at 1.04 million acres, down slightly from April intentions but 11% more than in 2016. Acreage is well off the highs but in line with the majority of the past eight years. The modest acreage increase leaves the 2017/18 supply outlook vulnerable to yield threats from dry conditions.



The USDA estimate of 2017 US flax area at 283,000 acres is 24% smaller than last year, the second straight year of sizable declines. This acreage estimate was also lower than the USDA's planting intentions report and is below the 5-year average of 335,000 acres. A smaller 2017 US flax crop will likely require increased imports in the coming marketing year.



As of late June, the Saskatchewan flax crop was rated 50% good/exc. This was a slight increase from the previous report, in contrast to declines for other crops. Even so, this rating is well below the 10-year average of 65% and suggests flax will have difficulty achieving an average yield in 2017. Conditions in Alberta are somewhat better while North Dakota ratings are poor.



The updated acreage estimates along with indications from crop condition ratings are suggesting a smaller 2017 North American flax crop. In western Canada, reduced yields will offset the increased acreage for a similar sized crop as in 2016, but the US crop is considerably smaller. The total 2017 crop is forecast at 710,000 tonnes, compared to 800,000 tonnes in 2016.