

# Haney Farms Quarterly



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Look for Shaun's  
Point Blank  
Column in the  
Grain News

## To the Point—Being Green Has Never Been Easier

By Shaun Haney

"Its not easy being green!"

-Kermit the Frog-

Kermit may have to eat those words sometime soon. The new color of our century is definitely green and everybody wants to ride the green wave which is having it's major affects on all of society. Being green is cool and all of the business world is trying to align their products, services and practices with the new green revolution. The media is continuously focusing on giving us tips on how to be more green, acclaiming green companies and making sure you are aware of how much greenhouse gas was produced in the production of your favorite mountain bike.

This phenomenon is also showing its affects on agriculture's relationship with the consumer. In the November 2007 Fast Company Magazine, a green phone produced by FrogTel was showcased. The green phone has a food check sensor that sniffs the air around uncooked meat or poultry, and measures the bacterial activity that is being generated. On the front panel of the phone a green signal says that the food was fresh while a red signal tells the shopper that maybe they should find some tofu.

Or how about the hysteria around farmers selling carbon credits to industry because they practice minimum tillage. Many have

criticized this sort of trading program based on the fact that it allows non-green companies to pay others to reduce their emissions instead of reducing their own.

The TV and print media are also continually informing us how to lead a greener lifestyle. The question is what is pushing this agenda forward? Does it make us better citizens, consumers or business people?

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ganic, and that organic  
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profit opportunity.*

I am not prepared to answer this but I am willing to venture out and say that your farm is going to be more and more affected by it.

Paul Gild described in the online magazine Synthesis / Regeneration (edition 28) that, "The word "Green" in the broadest conception of the culture of food production, means a great deal more than just a set of techniques or methodologies applied to food growing processes."

Initially, the mainstream scoffed at the ridiculousness of organic



and natural foods and took great joy in forecasting their impending doom. The reality is that the masses now want to be green and more and more they are willing to pay for those products even if they do cost more. However, it does seem that the price margin between traditional foods and organic is narrowing due to the participation of companies like Wal-Mart joining in the organic fray.

Wal-Mart's involvement in the momentum of being green does not come without some controversy. Many organic activists sight that this is the commercialization of organic and that organic is a way of life, not a profit opportunity. In the September 2007 issue of Fast Company the cover story referred to Adam Werbach, a renowned green activist, turning his back on the community of environmentalists by taking a job with Wal-Mart.

Meanwhile at the same time there are debates as to whether or not we want to expose the consumer to cloned beef.

Am I missing something? Are the

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consumers' needs that diverse? On one end of the spectrum people will only eat organic or natural or food grown within 100 miles of their house and at the other end of the spectrum people want consistent cloned meat? I guess the answer is yes. The difference is that the middle of the spectrum seems to be moving more to-

wards being green.

Don't be mistaken, being green has become much more than not showering or living in a tent. The new definition of green is much more broad and closer to "being responsible." More importantly the new definition of being green fits and attracts more mainstream consumers.

Farmers have been told for years

that we have to listen to the consumer more and produce what they want. The challenge is that consumer demand is becoming increasingly fractured.

With this focus on being green, I am sure that Kermit feels like he has been vindicated like Hillary Clinton was in the New Hampshire primary.

**Whether you agree or disagree with Shaun, send your feedback to [shaney@haneyfarms.com](mailto:shaney@haneyfarms.com)**

## Optimizing Returns With the Right Canola Variety

By Derek Johnson

In today's age of advanced canola seed genetics and an abundance of new production technologies, it is necessary to do some product research and analysis prior to determining the canola seed variety that is best suited for your farm.

Before going out and buying the next "latest and greatest" canola variety, you need to consider several aspects, including: your farm income needs, how you will market your canola production, your crop production practices, and your weed control options.

### Farm Income and Marketing Your Canola

Knowing when you require income on your farm is pivotal when selecting the best possible canola variety to grow. With spring crop production bills coming due in the fall, you may require cash flow during the harvest timeframe; or on the other hand, you may be able to store your canola and capture more dollars in the marketplace by hedging your production out to later delivery months. Either way, there are canola varieties available to fit the marketing plan of any farm operation in Western Canada; and by establishing a specific delivery period for your canola production, you gain a better perspective of the

canola varieties that can be grown and marketed in that timeframe. Specialty and high oil canola varieties are marketed under Identity Preserved contracts and must be hauled to the elevator during specific delivery windows. Other open-pollinated and hybrid varieties that are not tied to IP contracts can be sold on the commercial market utilizing various contracting options offered by grain companies including spot, basis and futures contracts.

Marketing your canola crop begins once you determine how many acres you plan to grow and what your target yield and selling price is. Selecting the best possible yielding variety with the least amount of dockage will help in this process. High yielding canola varieties, including hybrids, generate the greatest number of bushels per acre, and herbicide tolerant production systems allow for the best weed control and the least amount of dockage.

### Crop Production Practices

Crop production practices must be considered before selecting the canola variety that will perform best on your farm. Fertility rates, tillage practices and water management are three key attributes in producing a profitable canola crop. Canola typically uses the same amount of fertilizer as wheat; with the exception of a

greater need for sulfur in soils that are sulfur deficient. As well, canola requires regular seasonal moisture for optimum production, just as wheat does. The Canola Council of Canada reports that an average canola crop of 31 bushels per acre requires between 12 and 13 inches of moisture over the course of the growing season. In conjunction with this, canola requires good seed to soil contact at a seeding depth of no more than 0.5 inches in order to attain ideal emergence.

The above characteristics are necessary to produce an optimal canola crop, and only by matching the proper variety with your farm's production practices, will you achieve the best returns per acre. For instance, if you are a dryland farmer with traditional canola yields of 30 bushels per acre due to a scaled-back crop nutrition plan along with reduced amounts of annual rainfall, you should consider minimizing your production costs by growing an Open-Pollinated variety. "There is no use swinging for the fence if you can only hit singles." On the other hand, in favorable growing conditions, including irrigation, and with a comprehensive crop nutrition plan, you can hit a home run for your farm by growing a high-yielding hybrid variety. Today's

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**Derek Johnson, CCA**

*Derek has worked in the crop production and marketing industry in Southern Alberta for ten years. Derek grew up on a seed farm in Wainwright, AB*

## Lethbridge College Shares its Story

By Shaun Haney

Byrne Cook, an Animal Science Instructor at the Lethbridge College is concerned and in my opinion he should be. Enrollments in the college's agricultural program are trending downwards and the issue is widespread across the developed world.

"There are a lot of kids walking down the hall in Wranglers but the problem is that they are going to Environmental Science classes instead of the AG program," exclaimed Byrne Cook."

The Lethbridge economy has deep roots in agriculture which traditionally translated into a healthy vibrant agricultural studies program at Lethbridge College. Enrollment is down 50% from five years ago which has Byrne

scratching his head as to how to stabilize this downward trend. The curious part is that the ag industry really has turned around and looks very promising again in comparison to the early 2000's and enrollments have not swung back with the industry yet.

"Even though there are a tonne of jobs for our agricultural students, there is a perception that there is no real future in ag," Byrne lamented in a frustrated tone.

The Lethbridge College's ag program has two focuses for the education of students: soil plant science and animal science. Students take one year of general ag studies and the second is focused in their desired field.

The students enrolled in the program are diverse based on the

breakdown of where they go after graduation. One third go back to the farm, one third enter industry and one third enter a post diploma program at an university.

For young people that want to come back to the family farm, a post secondary education is becoming a must. Farming is no longer a "I'll just work harder kind of business". Farming is a business with complex decisions and due to the thin margins, bad decisions are not affordable. I encourage all young people that read this newsletter to consider looking at programs like what the Lethbridge College offers and give yourself and your farming operation the greatest chance at success.



*If you have any questions about the agricultural programs at the Lethbridge College contact Byrne Cook at (403) 320-3311*

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canola genetics are better than ever, and by using proper management practices, you can achieve top performance and return on your canola seed investment.

### Weed Control Options

Knowing your crop rotation and what weeds are present in your field also dictates which variety you should grow. In canola production, there are four systems to choose from:

1. Imidazolinone-tolerant, also known as CLEARFIELD®
2. Glyphosate-tolerant, also

known as Roundup Ready®

3. Glufosinate ammonium tolerant, also known as Liberty Link®
- the traditional Conventional system

Depending on your weed spectrum, you may have to select a variety based on the herbicide that it is associated with. For weed infested fields, a Roundup Ready® variety is the best agronomic choice for controlling winter-annual and annual weeds with 2 applications of glyphosate. In wheat, pea, canola rotations, a CLEARFIELD® variety makes good sense as the crop protection component offers control of flushing weeds all in one pass. Each pro-

duction system brings different agronomic attributes to the table and these features must be understood prior to purchasing the canola variety.

Identifying your weed control needs, knowing what your farm is capable of producing, and understanding when your crop needs to be marketed in order to generate income, will go a long way in helping you determine the canola variety that will generate the most success on your farm.

If you are considering growing canola call Haney Farms to discuss what variety is the best fit for your farm.

Call Don McDowell If You Need Seed This  
Spring (877)-738-4517



# Taking a Bat to Clubroot

By Shaun Haney

It seems that there is always a disease or insect reeking havoc in our crops. This year's disease on the tip of everyone's tongue is clubroot.

## Clubroot???

Unless you live in the Edmonton area your response to the first paragraph is probably, "What is Clubroot?"

According to the Alberta Clubroot Management Plan which can be found on Ropin' the Web, clubroot is a disease of the cabbage family which includes canola. Clubroot is spread through earth tag. Clubroot's resting spores can live in the soil for up to 20 years. Under tight rotations the disease can cause 100% yield loss.

Murray Hartman, Oilseed Specialist, with Alberta Agriculture stated, "the disease has been traditionally confined to the Edmonton area but that is starting to change." Hartman confirmed that there were two irrigated fields of canola infected with the disease this past summer in the Basano region.

## What Does Clubroot Look Like?



According to Ropin' the Web, the visible symp-

toms of the disease early on can be a wilting, stunting and yellowing of the plant in the late rosette to early podding stage. The disease robs the plants of its ability to use water and nutrients which means hot dry weather can really cause stress for an already stressed plant.

## What Steps Do I Need to Take to Prevent It?

According to the Alberta Clubroot Management Plan the following are the recommended best management practices:

1. Rotate canola every four years to minimize disease development within the field if it is infected.
2. Clean off your equipment which has a build up of soil when switching fields.
3. Use direct seeding to reduce soil erosion.
4. Scout your canola field regularly to identify wilting, stunting, yellowing and premature ripening.
5. Avoid the use of straw, hay, greenfeed, silage or manure from an infected area.
6. Avoid common untreated seed, including canola, cereals and pulses.

*Photos are courtesy of Ropin' the Web*

# KVD to Be Removed by 2010

*This article is reprinted by permission of the author and Farm Credit Canada. It was originally published in the December 21, 2007 issue of FCC's e-newsletter, AgriSuccess Express. For subscription information about AgriSuccess Express, see [www.fcc-fac.ca](http://www.fcc-fac.ca).*

By Rae Groeneveld

The use of Kernel Visual Distinguishability to segregate Western Canada's wheat classes is into its last couple years of existence. The federal government has slated removal of KVD from the major classes of wheat for August 1, 2010. A committee with representatives from the Canadian Grain Commission, Canadian Wheat Board, Inland Terminal Elevators Association, Western Grain Elevator Association as well as prairie producers was established this fall to determine what alternative systems will need to be put in place.

"Well I kind of reserve judgment on how much benefit there will be to me as a producer," Chuck Fossay, Starbuck, Manitoba producer says. Fossay is also part of the KVD committee.

"I've liked KVD because it's a low cost way of segregating classes of wheat."

The changes to the wheat classification system are being brought forward to allow for newer

varieties to be introduced. Researchers and many producers have long been frustrated over the inability to access higher yielding or disease resistant wheat varieties just because they aren't visually distinguishable from another class of wheat.

"KVD has been a tremendous impediment to the development of new varieties," Blair Rutter, executive director of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, says.

"We have not had a red winter wheat variety registered in six years and in most of those cases it's because they failed to meet the KVD requirements."

According to Fossay, there are a number of hurdles to overcome as the grain industry transitions away from KVD. The liability and risk the wheat grower will carry will be greater in a system without KVD.

"So you're going to have to make sure the grain you're loading out of a bin is actually red spring wheat and not grain of another class when you deliver it to the elevator system."

That will mean a declaration system will be used whereby producers will have to submit a sample of the grain and sign an affidavit certifying the wheat variety is exactly what they say it

is.

Fossay is worried that this will lead to greater scrutiny on the farm whereby growers will be forced to use certified seed, clean out bins and hoppers more thoroughly and keep better track of their grain storage.

Blair Rutter says on-farm management will be no different since producers already segregate grain on their farm for other crops. Tolerances will also be established to allow for some mixing of different wheat classes.

"There are tolerances in export shipments. For every shipment of wheat there are limits set and it varies depending on the grade. No. 1 is the tightest of course, but there are limits for wheat of different classes and of course that has to be in place."

Rutter doesn't believe the transition away from KVD will be a huge challenge for the Prairie grain industry. He would have preferred to see the timeline tightened to Aug. 1, 2009.

The first major change away from KVD will occur Aug. 1, 2008 when the minor classes of wheat will no longer be required to meet the visual inspection requirements.