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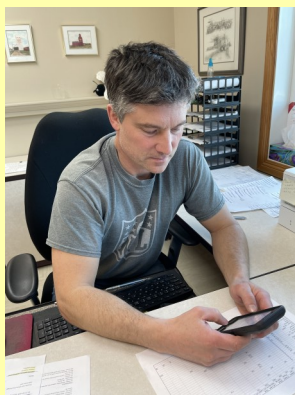
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Fall Newsletter 2021

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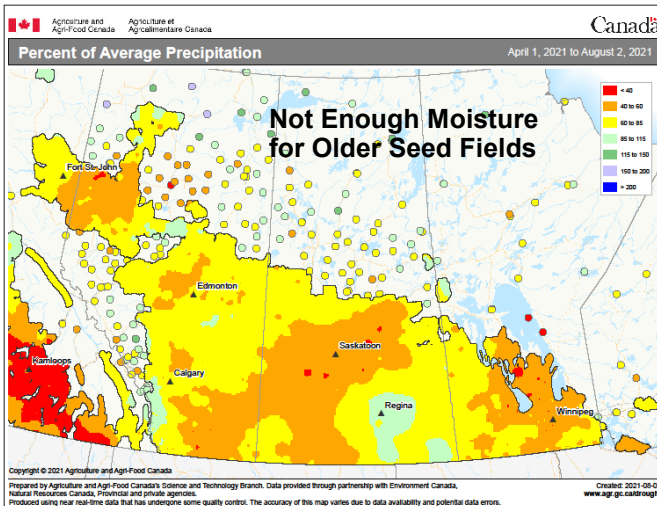
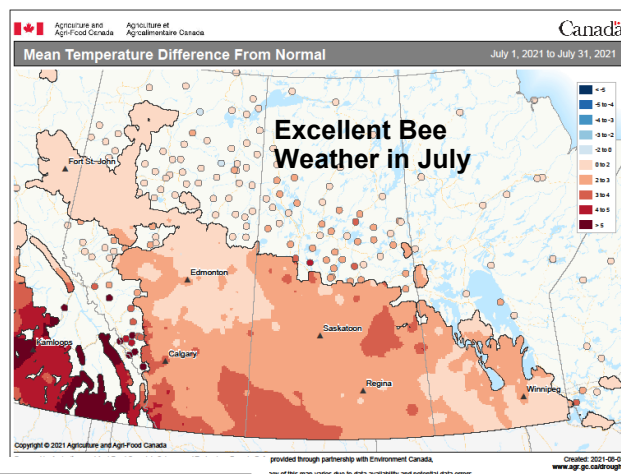
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EVERY YEAR IS DIFFERENT

2021 WEATHER:

We have just come thru one of the hottest years on record. Temperatures were hitting 40C at bee release time. There was concern that temperatures in the shelter, and in the trays, could kill bees not yet emerged.

We didn't see that, not in our bees or in bees released in other style shelters. We know they can't take this in the incubator, but once all the emerged bees leave the trays, the rest seem to emerge OK.



Drought Was A Problem:

Water for the plants was the issue for many growers. If it was dry last fall, and you missed all the thunderstorms, the older stands were in big trouble. An older thick stand without a well charged water table just couldn't fill the seed. In extreme cases the flowers dropped off, and only stems remained.

?? Big Alfalfa Seed Crop ??

Day after day of 30C made excellent conditions for the bees. With this great pollinating weather, we should all have a bumper alfalfa seed crop. For sure, plant disease wasn't an issue. But maybe the crop isn't as big as we think.

Plant and Lygus Bugs:

The plant and lygus bug pressure was intense for many growers. One grower sprayed 4 times with Matador, and still lost most of the crop. Insecticide resistance looks like a growing problem. Adding to the insecticide issue is the removal of Lorsban from the marketplace. It has been very effective on cutworms and alfalfa weevil larva.

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ALFALFA YIELDS UNDER EXTREME DROUGHT:

By the third week of July, for those of us who missed the thunderstorms, the crop was finished. We had barley with no heads, and wheat with nothing in the head. Kind of like politics! The canola crop looked pretty hopeless, and flea beetles, grasshoppers, and lygus bugs were trying to put it out of its misery. The alfalfa seed and bee crop looked good in areas with moisture, but not very good in the dry areas.

Alfalfa will do its very best when it comes to seed production under stress. We found our 3' row spacing could still crank out 100 lbs/acre in the really poor areas. Where it had moisture from a bit of snow melt ponding we would see 1,000 lbs/acre on the monitor.



100 lbs/acre

1,000 lbs/acre

We started harvesting alfalfa seed on August 27th. This is a field in it's 3rd year of production, and it ran about 350 lbs/acre clean seed. Simply Amazing.



Harvest Options:

Swath: All good unless the wind blows, or it snows.

Liberty: Slow desiccation, leaving green stems, but very little regrowth that fall

Reglone: Quick desiccation, and quick harvest, but alfalfa regrowth can happen if it rains and is warm.

The fields in these pictures were all desiccated with a Reglone knock-off.

AFTER DROUGHT, HEAT, & BUGS, WHAT COULD HAPPEN NEXT?

Actually we had two things happen after all this extreme weather. After the crop had struggled to this point on less than 3 inches of rain, the moisture came as hail. That wasn't very nice. But then came six inches of rain on these mature and struggling crops.

The canola decided it could still do something, so it began to regrow from the lower stem. The poor canola crop we left to straight cut is now very green.



Canola Regrowing After Being Dead Ripe

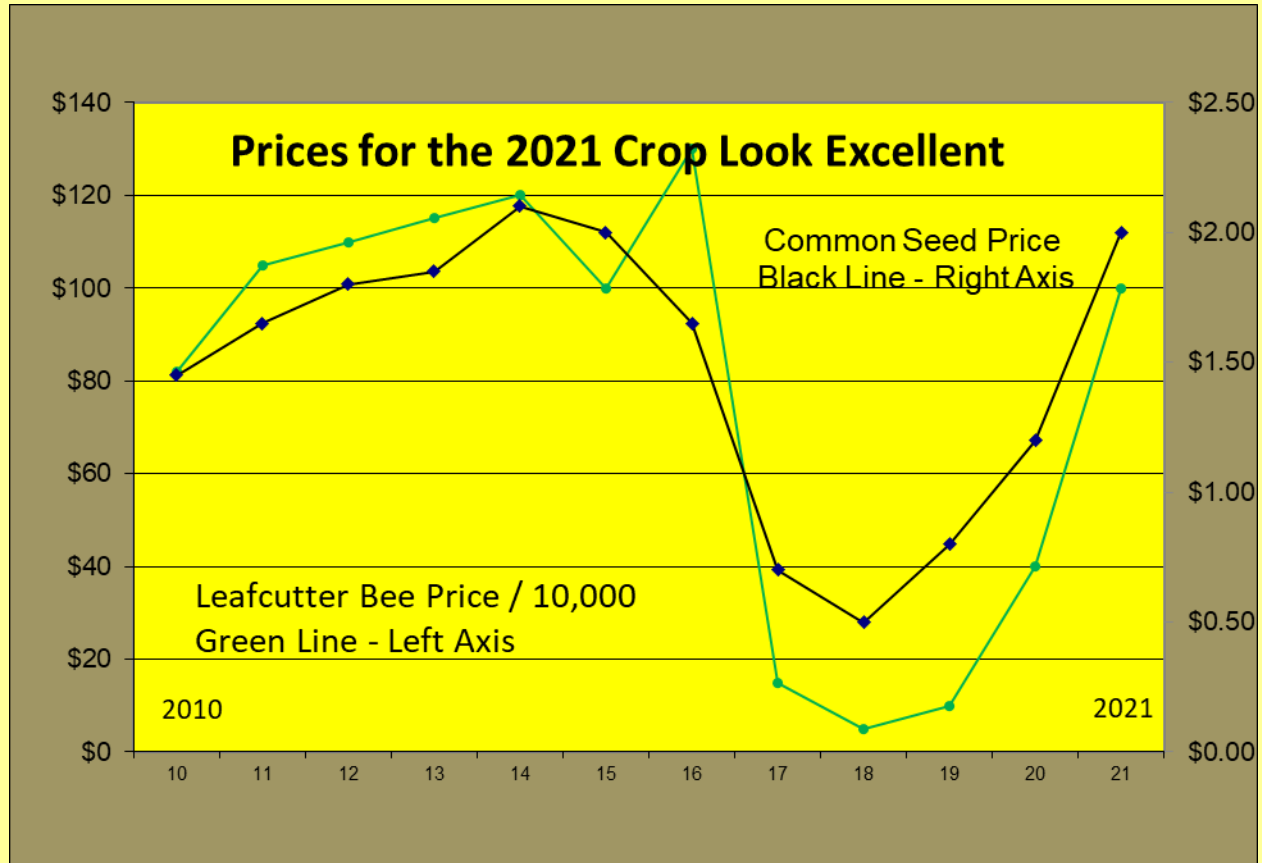
Alfalfa Regrowth following Desiccation



There is nothing like 6" of rain to get the alfalfa excited about growing again. This regrowth comes quickly and is really hard to stop with more Reglone.

Combine as fast as you can.

ALFALFA SEED AND LEAFCUTTER BEE MARKETS



Alfalfa Seed:

Sales have been made that reflect a grower price of **\$2.00 per pound** for good quality common seed at the current exchange rate for the 2021 crop.

Can this price hold? Go Up? Go Down?

This is about world supply and demand. On the supply side, for every good crop there is a poor crop. Some seed fields suffered bug damage to the point of getting put up for hay. The overall acres of seed product in North America haven't increased very much. Planting of alfalfa for hay has been steady, and hay prices are very good. It doesn't sound like there is much common seed production in South Dakota. Some of our customers have "bought inventory" and were slow in taking delivery. Some of our customers are asking us to ship 2021 crop as soon as we can. But we are not getting pushed for new sales. We are at a price level where no one is anxious to hold inventory. How big is the alfalfa seed crop? Where is the Canadian \$ headed?

Before we get too excited about potential increases in alfalfa seed acres, let's not forget that all the other commodity prices - wheat, canola, barley, corn, soybeans are up even more than alfalfa seed. How do we figure that in?

Leafcutter Bees:

Bees were in short supply and brought as much as \$75 late last spring. We have three markets:

Alfalfa Seed Acres in Canada and USA:

These acres are not getting less for 2022. USA Companies are trying to plant new acres. USA growers are booking bees early. California acres of non-dormant alfalfa will need bees.

Hybrid Canola Seed Production in Alberta:

These were the guys needing bees late last spring. Will they need less bees for the 2022 crop?

Eastern Blueberry Growers: They have been steady buyers, but higher prices can turn them to honeybees.

Our bee supply looks similar or perhaps a bit bigger than last year. Will the market absorb our 2021 bees at **\$100?**

Here is the start of pollination. Craig and Tracy are putting trays in the shelters on June 26, 2021.



AND STILL WE FARM:

For many farmers in Western Canada, the struggle of 2021 will stay in their memories and reminisces for a lifetime, like 1937 or 1961. Maybe this picture from our 2021 wheat harvest speaks to the farmer in all of us.

To quote Tennyson
"Ours is not to reason why,
Ours is but to do or die"

And from another Saskatchewan farmer who has started their alfalfa seed harvest. He texted this photo of how it looks when its good.



2021 Alfalfa Seed Crop,
NE Saskatchewan



From a Woman - The Final Word on 2021

Maybe we didn't need the rain right now,
but the earth sure needed it.

OUR 2021 PRICE PREDICTION:

Common Seed starts at \$2.00 / pound

Bees go for \$100

Please send us a 1 kg sample of any alfalfa seed you have for sale

We will do a detailed dockage test and give you a quote for dockage and price

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