



# BOARD Bulletin

Official Newsletter of the Prairie Certified Crop Advisor Board

Spring 2004

## Chair's Message (by John Heard, CCA, P.Ag.)

The Prairie Certified Crop Advisor (PCCA) Board is always striving to improve the value of the CCA program; for the membership, and the industry. As such, new promotional activities have been undertaken to raise awareness for the designation within the industry, and increase the value of services provided to the members. Over the winter months, the Board has been working to revamp the PCCA website, and is currently investigating a liability insurance program for its members. While these are just some new services to look forward to, the Board is also interested in ensuring that the perceived value of being recognized as a CCA is maintained.

In the last edition of the PCCA newsletter you may have noticed an insert containing the names of newly certified CCAs, and those who left the program for various reasons. This will become a permanent feature in the Fall edition. It is very encouraging to see new individuals earn their designation! However, it is also important to understand why others have elected to leave the program. As such, the Prairie Board has begun conducting "exit interviews" with these individuals.

Looking at the findings from the surveys, the most common explanation for departure was that the individual had recently changed jobs, and their new position either did not require CCA status, or did not permit time to attend CEU events. Furthermore, some members from this group had also moved entirely out of agricultural work. Cost was also an issue in remaining a CCA. While registration fees were not a concern, the time and money to attend CEU accredited event was an issue.

We acknowledge that CEUs may not be cheap or easy to obtain, but they are an essential cornerstone of the program. Included in this newsletter is a list of upcoming events and reminders of how you may apply to self-report credits. But we must be honest, 5% indicated they were leaving the program for lack of value. This we are doing our best to change.

The respondents were also asked if they would re-enter the program should they return to the crop-advising sector - 76% responded yes. The primary reason was that they enjoyed the training, as it had increased their agronomic knowledge. Interestingly enough, while there was a real willingness to rejoin the program, many indicated that they would be reluctant to re-challenge the CCA exam, as part of the reinstatement process.

As the program evolves, it is inevitable that the membership numbers will fluctuate. However, based on the survey, the majority of individuals who exit the program can readily identify with its importance. This is excellent news! The Prairie Board has decided that in order to improve the significance of the program, it will continue to conduct "exit interviews" to ensure that the letters C-C-A remains a high caliber/ highly touted designation.



- Visit [www.agronomy.org/ccca/index.html](http://www.agronomy.org/ccca/index.html) for
- tips on applying for CEU credits.
- Remember, all completed applications
- must be faxed to the CEU Chair, Gary
- Martens, at (204) 474-7528.



## Standards & Ethics: A Cooperative Effort

What differentiates the CCA program from a membership club, is the fact that it is a certification program where the stakeholders uphold standards that employers, growers, and government agencies have come to trust for sound agronomic knowledge. As part of this elite group, you can help yourself, your co-workers, and the industry reap the benefits of this designation with the knowledge gained through ongoing education.

**Help yourself.** It is important to regularly monitor your Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits and ensure that you earn the minimum 40 per two-year cycle. In addition to seminars, CEUs can be earned through the self-study and self-reporting options. The Board is reminding the members that they invested a great deal of time and effort to initially attain their designation. However, adhering to the ongoing learning initiative is also crucial.

**Help your co-workers.** CCA membership continues to grow. In fact, many of your co-workers may be planning to write the 2005 exams. As such, you can be a great asset to them when studying for the test, or filling out the credentials package. Talk to them about their plans to prepare for the exams and the necessary qualifications to satisfy the certification criteria. Most importantly, make sure they understand the mandatory ongoing commitments associated with this program.

**Finally, help the industry.** You can ensure that high quality – CEU accredited - training initiatives are available to the membership. While the Prairie Board does not directly offer training opportunities, it does regularly provide input to industry organizations on potential speakers and topics of interest. If you participated in a seminar that would interest others, let us know. Remember, it is in every member's best interest to ensure the high standards for continuing education are upheld.

### The Tribe has Spoken...

The Prairie CCA Board would like to congratulate Richard Lussier, from Agricore United in Grande Prairie, Alberta, as he was selected as the 2003 "CCA of the Year". This award recognizes Richard's outstanding efforts in providing farmers with sound agronomic advice in this unique crop production area of Alberta. Congratulations Richard!

### A Card of Thanks!



Special thanks goes out to Reg Helwer and John Harapiak for their services and efforts on the PCCA Board. John served as the Chair, and the Canadian Representative to the ICCA Board. Reg represented the interests of the ag industry as the Industry Employer Representative and the Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers (CAAR) Representative to the PCCA Board. Their exceptional dedication to the promotion and operations of the Prairie CCA program is greatly appreciated!

### PCCA Website Update

Looking to access the PCCA website? This popular page containing: a copy of the CEU application form; a calendar of CEU events; and general information on the CCA program, can now be found at [www.prairiecca.ca](http://www.prairiecca.ca). In the meantime, look for some exciting new features and major revisions to the website this summer.

### New Faces on the Board

A special "Welcome" goes out to Bob Evans, from Gates Fertilizers Ltd. in Nipawin, SK. Mr. Evans joins the Board as the Industry Employer, and CAAR Representative to the PCCA Board. Welcome Bob!



# Testing 123!

As a Certified Crop Advisor, the catch phrase “The First Friday in February” is a well-known saying. It is the day that all CCAs begin their road to certification with the first step – challenging the Prairie and International exams. This year was no different, as 133 candidates lined up across the Prairie Provinces to test their agronomic knowledge on the rigors of the CCA program.

Looking at the overall pass rate, 56% of the candidates successfully completed the Prairie exam. As in previous years, statistics indicate that a large percentage of examinees scored better on the International exam, as opposed to the regional test. Every year, the Prairie Board analyzes the year-to-date, and historical, performance of writers using common questions to ensure the local exam is comprehensive, yet fair. Based on the findings, the Prairie Board continues to maintain a challenging exam - this standard will not be compromised.

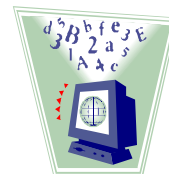
With the 2004 exam complete, the Committee has turned its focus to the Performance Objectives for the next CCA testing schedule. For 2005, the Nutrient Management core competency area will be up for review. As in previous years, 60 CCAs will be randomly selected to provide feedback to the Exam Committee on the current subject matter, and input on recommended changes to this component of the program. However, comments on the POs can be made at any time by contacting the Exam Committee Chair, Adrian Johnston, at [ajohnston@ppi-ppic.org](mailto:ajohnston@ppi-ppic.org). The Committee would like to encourage those members who are selected to complete the survey to provide feedback, as this information is essential to maintain the dynamics of the CCA program.

## Alberta CCA Report (by Norm Flore, P.Ag, CCA)

Greetings to all of my fellow Alberta CCAs. With the 2004 crop season in full swing, you will rely on the knowledge and expertise learned through your training to provide economic and environmentally sustainable recommendations to producers in your area. Remember, you have worked hard to earn your CCA designation – don't be shy about promoting it.

As a CCA, you have met the requirements of the four pillars of this program: Exam; Education; Ethics; and Experience. However, without proper self-promotion, the value of this achievement may not be properly recognized. Therefore, take the opportunity to talk to your customers about the merits of this program and what the acronym represents. A good venue would be during customer appreciation days, field tours, or agronomy seminars.

In the meantime, I welcome any feedback or comments you may have relating to the CCA program. Please feel free to contact me at (403) 279-1111 or via email at [NA.Flore@WestcoAg.com](mailto:NA.Flore@WestcoAg.com).



### Self-Apply on the Fly

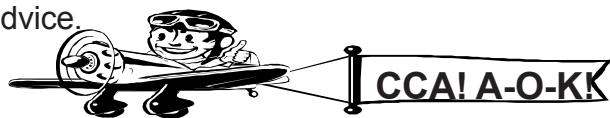
Have you recently attended a seminar that focused on agronomic, or professionalism, topics but the host did not apply for CEU credits? In this situation, the Prairie Board is reminding its members to visit [www.agronomy.org/cca/index.html](http://www.agronomy.org/cca/index.html) and click on the “Self-Reporting” link. Using this form, members can attain their own credits for an event by keying in the appropriate information. However, as this is a self-reporting option, you MUST retain all relevant information, i.e. agendas and handout materials, from the entire session for audit purposes.



## Marketing Committee Report

This past winter, the Marketing Committee has had a lot of new issues to tackle. As the CCA program matures, the Committee has needed to refocus some of its efforts from recruitment to raising awareness about the program at the grower level and providing some real value and recognition to members. Over the last few months several members of the Prairie Board and Dan Dubreuil, from Advanta Seeds, worked to put together a formal marketing plan for the program. Using some of the results of a producer survey carried out in Manitoba, they were able to gauge awareness levels and what exactly appeals to producers about the program. Based on this and other sources, they know that awareness is low but are encouraged by the fact that once aware, interest from producers is very high.

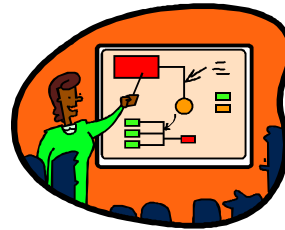
Their next step is to put into action our tactical plan that will include a new website and more visibility to producers at trade shows and through farm publications. Most importantly though, and this is a key point, there will be more resources available to help CCAs and their organizations promote the program to producers and why producers should look to CCAs as being their main source for cropping advice.



Anybody who has ever tried to promote a service or product knows how difficult (and expensive!) it can be, especially when competing for the customer's attention against those who have much larger budgets. Luckily there is a sales force of over 700 in Western Canada who can speak to producers directly on the benefits of having a crop scout who is educated, continually upgrades his/her knowledge and abides by a Code of Ethics. Stay tuned for more on how you can help and be a part of building the CCA program into an indispensable accreditation for producers and crop advisors alike.

## Crop Management Update

Visit [www.prairiecca.ca](http://www.prairiecca.ca) to obtain your copy of the 2004 Prairie Performance Objectives, as the Crop Management section has been revised with new information on: the Seeds Act; forage production; and precision farming.



## Professional Development = Continuing Education

The Prairie Board is reminding its members that they are eligible to earn a maximum of 5 CEU credits in the Professional Development (PD) category. This includes: ethics; computer courses; sales training; etc. While CEUs are typically associated with agronomic training, it is essential for the membership to encourage organizers of non-agronomic events to apply for credits. This will help increase attendance for the sponsor, and provide the CCA certified attendees with added value. For a complete list of PD topics visit [www.cropdecisions.com/cca/ccaadv200212.pdf](http://www.cropdecisions.com/cca/ccaadv200212.pdf)

### But What Do I Say?

Several of the newsletter comments indicate our best promotion of the program is by CCAs themselves. Enclosed is your CCA information postcard. It states current CCA Facts and reasons why CCAs are well positioned to aid growers. Carry it with you and share the advantages with your clients.



## Saskatchewan CCA Report (by Lyle Cowell, P.Ag., CCA)

Hello to all of my fellow Saskatchewan CCAs. With this being my first opportunity to communicate with you, I would like to thank you all for electing me as the Saskatchewan CCA Board Representative. I look forward to working with you, and representing your interests, on the Prairie Board.

As an agriculture stakeholder, I believe it is essential that farmers receive economical and environmentally sound information. As such, I believe that the CCA program is an excellent avenue to provide this agronomic training to our members. This is one of the main reasons that I have participated in the Prairie CCA program since its inception.

As part of my tenure on the Board, I aim to work with the industry to continue improving the training opportunities available in Saskatchewan, and promoting our signature within the business; government; and the community. As your elected Board representative, I am available to help answer any questions you may have about the CCA program. I can be reached at (306) 873-3456, or via email at [lyle.cowell@swp.com](mailto:lyle.cowell@swp.com).

**Attention all Alberta CCAs.** A continuing education credit program has been implemented, as part of the re-certification process for individuals maintaining their Pesticide Applicators License. As such, the credits earned during CCA-certified agronomic training events may also be applied to the pesticide applicator license. In addition, event organizers may want to apply for credit approval under both programs. For more information, visit [www.gov.ab.ca/env/protenf/pesticide/usage/applicator\\_certification\\_program.html](http://www.gov.ab.ca/env/protenf/pesticide/usage/applicator_certification_program.html)

## 2004 CCA of the Year Award Nominations

Preparations for the annual "CCA of the Year" award have begun with a call for nominations being included in the Spring 2004 edition of the PCCA newsletter. Sponsored by the Canadian Fertilizer Institute (CFI), the purpose of this award is to recognize the outstanding service provided by a CCA practicing in Western Canada. In addition, the award continues to heighten the awareness regarding the valuable contribution that the program provides for the industry.

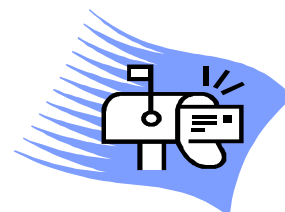


All current Prairie CCAs are eligible to be nominated by their colleagues, employers, or farm groups. With the numerous accomplishments and benefits to the industry that are accredited to CCAs, there are many individuals who deserve this award.

A template nomination form is included in this newsletter. To be valid, it must be completed and returned to the following address by August 31, 2004.

Prairie Certified Crop Advisor Board  
c/o CAAR  
Suite 107, 1090 Waverley St.  
Winnipeg, MB R3T 0P4

A Committee of the PCCA Board of Directors will review applications with the winner receiving their award during a Fall agronomic conference in their Province.



## CEU Statistics

In order to become CCA certified, an individual must prepare for two major commitments. The first is to devote the appropriate time and effort to study for the CCA exams. The second is to be dedicated to the continuing education requirements of the program. While some members do report difficulty in earning their required 40 CEUs per two-year cycle, the Prairie Board does evaluate the number of credits offered in each Prairie Province on a semi-annual basis to ensure adequate opportunities are available. Based on the most recent findings, here are some statistics.

Since last November, 93 CEU accredited seminars - offering an average of 5.4 credits per event - were scheduled in the Prairie Provinces. In total, 503.5 CEUs were available. Delving further, 65% of the CEUs offered in Alberta were open to the public, as compared to 42% and 70% in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, respectively. Based on these findings, the Board has concluded that there is sufficient CEU activity within the Prairie Region for the members to maintain their designation. However, the Prairie Board is also reminding its members to take advantage of the numerous self-study CEU opportunities available, as a maximum of 20 credits can be earned via this method.

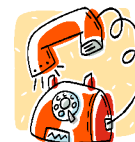


## Have You Checked Your Insurance Lately?

The Prairie Board is reminding its members to verify that they are covered by a Professional Liability Insurance policy. Also referred to as Errors & Omissions insurance, this policy will pay any compensatory damages, on your behalf, as a result of an error, omission or negligent act arising out of your professional services. Most businesses have a "Commercial General Liability" policy that covers bodily injury or property damage, however, it may not cover professional services.

## Dynamic Diagnostic Services

With the Spring seeding schedule already in full swing, it is time to begin thinking about upcoming insect, disease, and weed identification, as well as diagnostic services. The Prairie Board is reminding its members that there are representatives within each Prairie Department of Agriculture that can assist with these diagnostic activities. Be sure to contact the Department prior to sending in samples, as they may have the resources to respond to inquiries over the telephone. In addition, digital photographs are also a great tool for a quick a diagnosis. For more information contact:



Manitoba Agriculture Crop Diagnostic Lab  
Winnipeg, MB (204) 946-7707  
[Mardi Desjardins mdesjardin@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Mardi.Desjardins@gov.mb.ca)  
For more crop information: [www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca)

Alberta Agriculture, Food & Rural Development  
Ag-Info Centre (866) 882-7677  
[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/inf4443?opendocument](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/inf4443?opendocument)  
For more crop information: [www.agric.gov.ab.ca](http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca)

Saskatchewan Crop Protection Laboratory Services  
Regina, SK (866) 457-2377  
[http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/docs/about\\_us/organizational\\_info/cropprotection.asp](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/docs/about_us/organizational_info/cropprotection.asp)  
For more crop information: [www.agr.gov.sk.ca](http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca)

### CSI: CCAs Securing Insurance?

The International CCA Board is currently investigating the possible procurement of a group liability insurance package for CCAs. If you would be interested in this member service, please contact the PCCA Program Administrator, Jeff Kisiloski, at (204) 989-9307 or [jeff@caar.org](mailto:jeff@caar.org).



## Code of Ethics Corner

Part of the “certification” process for all newly accredited CCAs is to sign and abide by the CCA Code of Ethics. This commitment provides some guidance to the conduct of all CCAs and helps to minimize the potential for any discredit coming on the organization. To obtain a copy of the CCA Code of Ethics, visit [www.agronomy.org/cca/coe.html](http://www.agronomy.org/cca/coe.html). The Prairie Board would like to remind its members to read the Code as the integrity of the program depends on the ethical practices of its constituents.

**Take a second to ponder this ethical dilemma. What would you do in this situation?**



You are attending a CEU accredited event. One of your colleagues is very deficient in CEUs, but is unable to attend the workshop. They ask you to sign their name and number to the CCA sheet, and ‘fill them in’ on what you learned. What would you do?

**Answer:** According to the CCA Code of Ethics, (Article V. Duty to the Profession), an Applicant shall aid in exclusion from certification, those who have not followed this Code of Ethics or who do not have the required education and experience.

The main message is that the CCA program is built on fair and ethical continuing education practices. Supporting the delinquency of a colleague in this manner would be a violation of the Code of Ethics. All CCAs must be aware of this, and avoid this type of situation to prevent damaging their own credibility. If CEU credits are not earned in an ethical manner, the CCA status of *both individuals* may be revoked.

## Manitoba CCA Report (by Eric Gregory, CCA)

Over the winter season, the Prairie Board has been very busy continuing to promote the value of the CCA designation to our local legislators. These lobby efforts have focused on the inclusion of CCAs as a service provider in the development of Manure Management Plans.

The Prairie Board is currently working to be recognized as a technically and professionally competent group to meet new demands from our customers who will be subject to this new legislation. As part of the lobby efforts, the Board has met with the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture, KAP delegates, and the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists to discuss the merits of the CCA program. Support in this matter from other agricultural organizations has been excellent. However, we still need to be vigilant as a Board, and require your assistance. If you would like to participate in manure management planning activities, send a note to your local MLA (locate their address at [www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/members/who\\_is.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/members/who_is.html)) and ask for their support on this issue.

On another note, I would also like to thank those members from: Pembina Co-op; Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives; Shur-Gro Farm Services Ltd.; Morse Brothers Ltd.; and Advanta Seeds, who helped collect valuable information on the CCA program from producers during the Manitoba Ag Days conference in Brandon. This data has helped develop the Prairie Board’s marketing plan that will assist the Board, and the membership, to promote the value of the CCA designation within the industry.

Good luck with your **busy** spring season and remember to contact me with any of your questions or concerns regarding the program. I can be reached at (204) 735-2258, or via email at [eric@morsebrothers.ca](mailto:eric@morsebrothers.ca)



Looking for leading agronomic information in the Prairies? Visit these important websites

### **Alberta Pulse Growers: Pulse Agronomy Network (PAN)**

The Pulse Agronomy Network (PAN) links retail personnel, farmers, extension specialists, and researchers in the pulse industry. It provides timely answers and supporting resources to agronomists and farmers.

Web site: [www.pulse.ab.ca/agro/pulse\\_agro.htm](http://www.pulse.ab.ca/agro/pulse_agro.htm)

### **Saskatchewan Pulse Growers: Pulse Brief**

The Pulse Brief provides timely information on important items in the pulse industry every two weeks. Website: [www.saskpulse.com/pulsebrief.html](http://www.saskpulse.com/pulsebrief.html)

### **Canola Watch Reports**

During the growing season, the Canola Agronomy Network puts out a publication that shares crop conditions across Western Canada. In addition, key issues are identified on a weekly basis. Website: [www.canola-council.org/production/agronomy\\_net.html](http://www.canola-council.org/production/agronomy_net.html)

### **Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food, & Rural Revitalization Crop Production News**

Prepared by Provincial Specialists within the Crop Development Branch, this newsletter covers current entomology, plant pathology, weed, soil and agronomic issues within Saskatchewan and is available to agronomists twice a month. To be added to the mailing list please forward your email address to: [cmassier@agr.gov.sk.ca](mailto:cmassier@agr.gov.sk.ca)

### **Manitoba Agriculture Insect and Disease reports**

John Gavloski  
(204) 745-5668  
[JGavloski@gov.mb.ca](mailto:JGavloski@gov.mb.ca)

### **AB Pest Monitoring Network**

Weekly updates of maps of several insects.  
Web Site: [www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/app21/index.jsp](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/app21/index.jsp)

## **Ladies and Gentlemen, Your PCCA Board!!**

Visit [www.prairiecca.ca](http://www.prairiecca.ca) for contact information for each PCCA Board member.

John Heard  
P.Ag., CCA  
Board Chair,  
Carman, MB

Adrian Johnston  
P. Ag, CCA  
Exam Committee  
Chair, CFI Rep.  
Saskatoon, SK

Norm Flore  
P.Ag., CCA  
AB CCA Rep.  
Calgary, AB

Emile deMilliano  
P.Ag., CCA  
Chair, Standards &  
Ethics Committee  
AB Institute of  
Agrologists Rep.  
Sherwood Park, AB

Peter Loewen, P.Ag.  
MB Institute of  
Agrologists Rep.  
Winnipeg, MB

Blaine Canitz, P.Ag.  
SK Institute of  
Agrologists Rep.  
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Gary Martens  
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Etobicoke, ON

Bob Evans  
CAAR Rep.  
CCA Employer Rep.  
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