

# Crop Adviser Chronicle

The Official Prairie Certified Crop Advisor Board Newsletter  
Spring 2005

## Chair's Message

Finally, it's Springtime on the Prairies. Like many CCAs, I find it a very refreshing and exciting time of year. Spring signifies the start of a new cropping season. This year, it also helps us focus on the future, and forget some of the less than ideal agronomic situations encountered last year. Due to the favourable soil moisture conditions extending across the Prairie Region (something we haven't seen in a long time) there is a real sense of "optimism" for our industry. As you head back to the fields, hopefully you will implement some of the new ideas you learned this Winter during one of the numerous CEU training seminars. Keeping abreast of new agronomic information is our forté, and helps us when making cropping decisions for our farm customers.

While you investigated creative ways to help your customers with their crop management decisions this Winter, your Prairie CCA Board continued to look for innovative methods to promote the program, and your designation, to various agri-business sectors.

Perhaps one of the more recognized promotional efforts is the feature articles appearing quarterly in *Top Crop Manager (TCM) Magazine* profiling Western Canadian CCAs. Each article details how one of your colleagues used their CCA training to solve an agronomic problem they encountered. This is an excellent addition to TCM, and great exposure for the CCA program; the magazine's readership base is approximately 32,000. I would like to thank John Harapiak for spearheading this initiative, and for continuing to prepare the articles. He has been a long time supporter of the CCA program, and his continued involvement is greatly appreciated! If you know of a CCA who is doing an outstanding job because of their training, and deserves a bit of recognition in print form, contact your Provincial CCA Representative.

Finally, while the Prairie Board looks to meet the needs of existing members, we also strive to understand why some CCAs elect to leave the program. After reaching an all-time high of almost 800 members in 1999,

the PCCA membership base has levelled off at just over 700 strong. While attrition is a natural part of any program, the Prairie Board conducted exit interviews this Winter to find out why some members left the program. Surprisingly, over 75% of the respondents did so because they changed jobs, and were no longer advising farmers. Feedback from these departing members was very positive regarding the program. The majority indicated they would re-join if they returned to the crop consulting business.

This bodes well for your professional program. Remember, be proud of your designation, and always promote the value of the CCA acronym to your customers.

Have a great Spring!



Norm Flore, P.Ag., CCA



Visit the Prairie CCA Board's new website at [www.prairiecca.ca](http://www.prairiecca.ca)



## Alberta CCA Report

Environmental Farm Plans, Nutrient Management Plans, and Conservation Planning. For us Albertans, these terms are becoming common in our crop production world, and are growing in importance. While preparing and implementing these plans is the farmer's responsibility, they will look to us for expert advice, based on our credentials earned through the CCA program. And why not? CCAs should be the natural choice for farmers seeking agronomic information. We are very familiar with local environmental conditions and production practices. We are also qualified to tailor cropping practices that are suitable for the local conditions.

As a result of this exciting opportunity, I strongly recommend that you keep abreast of the various farm planning requirements. After all, this is an excellent chance to demonstrate the value the CCA designation to your farm clients. But how do you keep up to date? Training on EFPs is offered by an Alberta organization known as the Environmental Farm Plan

Company. They help familiarize industry members with the details of EFPs, and prepare participants to respond to plan enquiries. One-day workshops can be set-up upon request, and CEUs are available. For information call their office at (866) 844-2337.

Enjoy the Spring season!

Norm Flore, P.Ag., CCA



## And the Membership Remains...

As of March 2005, there are 716 CCAs currently registered in the Prairie CCA Region. Statistics report that the Prairie CCA membership base has begun to level off. The number of retirees is roughly equal to the number of new recruits annually. Provincially, there are 297 CCAs in Alberta, 222 in Saskatchewan, and 188 in Manitoba. The remaining 39 Prairie CCAs practice in either B.C., Ontario, the U.S., Africa, or Asia.

## Professional Development Equals Continuing Education

The Prairie Board is reminding its members that they are eligible to earn a maximum of 5 CEU credits in the

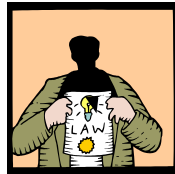


Professional Development (PD) category. This includes: ethics; computer courses; sales training; etc. While CEUs are typically associated with agronomic training, the membership must encourage all event organizers to apply for CEU credits. This will help increase attendance for the sponsor, and provide the CCA certified attendees with added value. Conversely, you can self-apply for the PD credits online. Visit [www.cropdecisions.com/cca/ccaadv200212.pdf](http://www.cropdecisions.com/cca/ccaadv200212.pdf) for a complete list of PD related CEU topics.

Attention all CCAs. Visit [www.agronomy.org/cca/index.html](http://www.agronomy.org/cca/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.

Check your CEU status online at [http://www.agronomy.org/cca/search\\_ceu.html](http://www.agronomy.org/cca/search_ceu.html)





## Manitoba CCA Report

Attention all Manitoba CCAs, I am pleased to report that fantastic CEU training opportunities are headed our way this Summer. This year our Province will host the Western Canada Agronomy Workshop (WCAC) on July 20, in Portage la Prairie. It will be held in conjunction with Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiative's (MAFRI) Crop Diagnostic School.

Attendance at the WCAC is limited 200 attendees and will be based on a first come, first serve, basis. Due to the cap on registrations, make sure you sign up as soon as possible. For an application form, check your mailbox this month, or download a registration form from [www.cfi.ca/events](http://www.cfi.ca/events).

Not only will there be excellent presenters, but Prairie Board members will also provide updates on their activities over the past year. This will include briefs on: CCAs authoring manure management plans; new promotional activities; and upcoming CEU training activities.

Registration fees for the WCAC include a day at MAFRI's crop diagnostics school. WCAC participants have the option of attending the diagnostics school on either July 19, or July 21. However, registrations for the MAFRI event are limited to 100 attendees per day.

It should be an excellent event! I hope to see you all in attendance.

Eric Gregory, CCA

## A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words

The Prairie Board is pleased to launch of the first annual "Capture a CCA on Camera" Photo Contest. Prairie CCAs are actively out in the field answering agronomic questions and providing cropping advice. The Prairie Board is looking to collect snapshots of the



members doing what they do best.

To enter the contest, send in a photo of yourself, or your colleagues, and a grower: crop scouting; collecting soil samples; assessing pest infestations; "penciling out" recommendations for a grower; checking seeding

depth and fertilizer placement; or calibrating equipment.

The best photo will be appear in the Fall 2005 newsletter, and the photographer will receive a CCA Windbreaker. All photos submitted will be used in upcoming promotional materials developed by the Prairie Board. The pictures must be taken with a digital camera, and must be 750kB to 1MB in size.

Along with the photo, please provide a caption identifying the CCA and grower. Because these photos will be used in future marketing programs, the Board asks that written permission be provided by yourself, and the grower.

All photo entries must be sent to the PCCA Program Administrator by October 30, 2005. Please email your pictures to [jeff@caar.org](mailto:jeff@caar.org)





## **“First Friday in February” Fallout**

This year, 123 candidates challenged the Prairie CCA exam. In summary, 70 passed the test, and 53 failed, for an overall success rate of 57%. In terms of the International exam, 107 individuals attempted the test, with a success rate of 65% (70 passed, 37 failed).

This large variation between International and Prairie test results is not uncommon. In fact, the number of candidates who successfully pass the International exam, compared to the Regional test, is traditionally higher.

The Prairie Board does review the results of the local exam annually to ensure the test is adequate. As part of the investigation, the year-to-year performance of writers is evaluated based on common questions from previous years. The group also compares the overall

scores from the Prairie and International tests. Despite a regular pass rate of only 50-60%, the Board is confident that they are maintaining a challenging, yet fair, exam. In addition, no serious adjustments will be made to increase the pass rate, as this may compromise the integrity of the Prairie exam.

## **Survey Says...**

The Exam Committee has completed their review of the Soil Fertility Performance Objectives (POs) for 2005. They would like to thank those CCAs who provided input on this process. Your feedback is critical to maintaining the high-calibre of the CCA program. The revised POs were approved and forwarded for publication. A copy of the new edition can be downloaded from the website at [www.prairiecca.ca](http://www.prairiecca.ca)

The Soil and Water Management core competency area is the next category that is up for review. As per previous years, 60 CCAs will be randomly selected this June to participate in an mail-in survey. The Board will be looking for feedback on the current POs, and seek input on recommended changes

to this component of the program.

While a group of 60 CCAs will be part of the focus group, anyone can critique the Performance Objectives. If you would like to provide an opinion on the current Soil and Water Management Performance Objectives, send your comments to Adrian Johnston at [ajohnston@ppi-ppic.org](mailto:ajohnston@ppi-ppic.org).



Special thanks goes out to Peter Loewen, P.Ag., CCA for his services on the Prairie Board. Peter represented the Manitoba Institute of Agrology, and was a member of the Standards and Ethics Committee. His dedication to the Prairie CCA program is greatly appreciated!

**Tell your customers about the special Growers section of the PCCA website  
[www.prairiecca.ca/growers/index.htm](http://www.prairiecca.ca/growers/index.htm)**

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## **Alberta Members Go Back to The Polls**

A motion passed at the November 2004 PCCA Board meeting has opened the door for the Alberta CCAs to elect a Provincial Delegate to represent their interests on the PCCA Board of Directors.

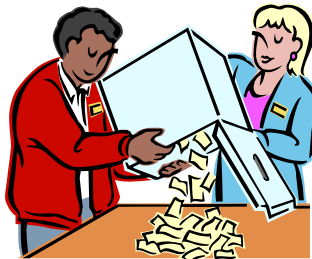
As per Board rules, only registered Certified Crop Advisors in the Province of Alberta can be nominated for the Directorship position. In order to get nominated, have your colleagues complete the enclosed nomination form, and include a brief summary (1/2 page) of your credentials (who you are, where you're from, your education, training, experience, your opinion on the CCA program, and its future direction).

For more information on what will be expected of you, if successfully elected to the PCCA Board of Directors, see the summary on the backside of the enclosed nomination form.

Nominations for the position will be accepted up until noon on Friday, July 15, 2005 and must be forwarded to the PCCA Administration office.

Ballots will be mailed out at the end of January to all Alberta CCAs, with the winner being announced in the Fall 2005 newsletter.

Come on Alberta! Get involved and help choose who will represent your Province on the PCCA Board. Nominate your best candidate today!!!!



## **The Seven Steps to Successful Promotion**

The Prairie Board is reminding its members to actively promote the CCA designation to the industry. Actively promoting the CCA status will help ensure the program's value is fully understood by government, the media, the public, and the agriculture industry. Here are seven low-cost, high return, marketing tips.

1. Include the initials CCA to your business cards, email signatures, and letterhead;
2. Use the CCA logo on business cards, company newsletters, flyers,

advertisements, etc. (an electronic logo is available on the Prairie CCA website);

3. Include "A Proud Supporter of the Certified Crop Adviser Program" on all promotional materials;
4. Discuss the merits of the CCA program at your grower meetings;
5. Add the CCA crest to your company clothing (an embroidery file is available on the website to minimize setup charges);
6. Nominate your colleagues for the annual CCA of the Year Award; and
7. Tell your clients you're CCA certified, how you earned the designation, and the benefits of dealing with a certified Crop Advisor.



**Do your colleagues and co-workers want to join the ranks of the CCA program?  
Their next opportunity to challenge the exam is on Friday, February 3, 2006.**

