

A PEAVEY INDUSTRIES PUBLICATION | SPRING 2023

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**STARTING
SEEDS**

CARBON

**LIVING THE
DREAM**

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GREETINGS

A MESSAGE FROM PEAVEY INDUSTRIES LP PRESIDENT AND CEO, DOUG ANDERSON

Welcome to the Spring 2023 issue of Connected to the Land. The onset of spring brings with it a surge of energy and the promise of new beginnings. As Canadians, we are used to the harsh winters and relish in the arrival of warmer weather and the season of growth. Whether you are seeding your field, planting your garden or refreshing your living space, spring signifies opportunity and we at Peavey are proud to be part of your journey.

This issue includes articles geared to helping you grow, in both the traditional and personal sense. We feature information on improving your soil health, growing indoors and share stories of “Living the Dream” in ag.

I hope you enjoy the Spring 2023 issues as much as the last. Please share any comments or suggestions by email to feedback@peaveyindustries.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

I invite you to check out connectedtotheland.info for more great information, insights and how-tos. 🍁

Doug Anderson

Photo by Drew Kenworthy.

DON'T MISS AN ISSUE!

Our most recent magazines are online at connectedtotheland.info



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Fresh & delicious.

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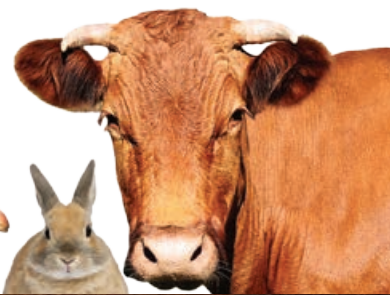
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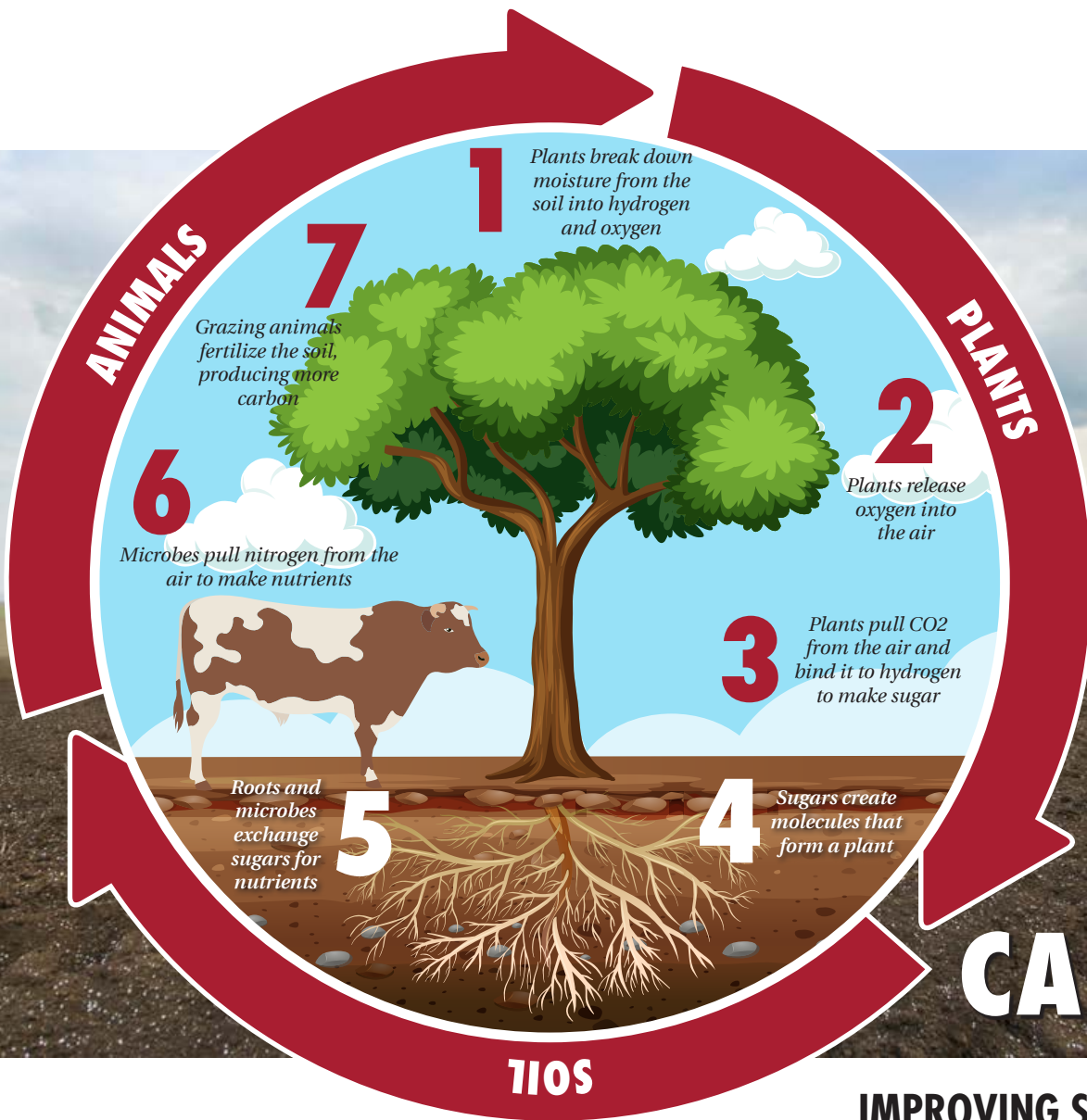
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CARBON

IMPROVING SOIL HEALTH FOR GARDENING AND FARMING

Story by Peg Strankman.

The history of agriculture is the practice of managing carbon (organic material), i.e. farming carbon. As demand for food increased with increased population, farming in a sustainable way became more challenging. But the basics of growing plants and cycling carbon still hold true.

The carbon cycle has been described as the basis of life on earth. Carbon is stored in rocks, soil, the ocean, living organisms and in the atmosphere as carbon dioxide.

Through the process of photosynthesis, plants pull carbon dioxide from the air to grow. Those plants are eaten by animals, and both plants and animals decompose to put carbon into the soil. Plants and animals also release carbon dioxide back into the air through respiration.

Agriculture is part art and part science, and gardeners will say the same. If you are reading

about the causes of climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation, you will be hearing about farming carbon to store more carbon in the soil.

Farmers have been farming carbon since the beginning of cultivated agriculture. But science and technology are helping them understand how to do it more effectively and with less environmental impact. Increasing and holding soil organic matter has a variety of benefits, such as increasing water retention and providing nutrients to plants. Gardeners see the improvement in soil structure. Farmers see the decrease in soil erosion and improved water quality in groundwater, ponds and sloughs.

Adding organic amendments (compost, manure, crop residues) to the soil is a practice long used by gardeners and farmers to increase the carbon in the soil. The nutrients

nourish the plants but are also important in holding water in the soil.

Gardeners can make their own compost by mixing leftover food and scraps with grass clippings and leaves. In the garden, it's relatively easy to add mulch to the surface of the soil around the plants. This will slow moisture evaporation, and over time the material decomposes, adding nutrients and organic material (carbon). Many gardeners rake leaves from the lawn onto their gardens to begin to decompose over the winter months. Some folks seed a green cover crop like ryegrass in the early fall to turn under in the spring. Increasing the health of the soil will offset GHG emissions by storing carbon from the decomposing plant material.

Using cover crops is a practice increasing in popularity in agriculture to hold moisture in the soil but also to increase the organic matter

(carbon) in the soil when the plants and their roots decompose. Sometimes the cover crop is grazed, and the animal manure helps amend the soil structure.

Crop rotations are important to consider. Plants differ in the shoot-root ratios and how much plant material is left on top to decompose and become food for micro-organisms. Gardeners and producers know that growing the same crop in the same area is not a great practice for disease reasons but also considering how demanding the crop is for nutrients and organic matter.

Reducing tillage helps hold carbon in the soil. Digging up the soil releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Producers have stopped the practice of summer fallowing, where the fields are plowed and left with no plant cover for a season. Gardeners will often plant directly into last year's mulch to avoid disturbing the soil. That's small scale, but again, it minimizes the release of carbon dioxide and not tilling discourages weed seed germination.

Planting perennial forages like grasses or alfalfa and clovers on cultivated land is another way of adding carbon to the soil. How those forages are managed with grazing animals also makes a difference to the amount of carbon that is stored in the soil. Planning the number of animals and timing of grazing will increase the number of roots in the soil, and that's where most of the carbon is stored.

Holding more carbon in the soil is good for soil health and may also be a new source of income for farmers when sold as a carbon credit. For several years, scientists have been working to quantify the amount of carbon that can be sequestered by different soil management practices. Advocacy groups and carbon trading companies are developing systems to manage the carbon credit transactions between agricultural producers and companies.

There are two kinds of carbon markets—voluntary and compliance. The compliance offset markets trade in a marketplace where regulated companies are government regulated to meet predetermined targets. Companies like Biological Carbon Canada trades only carbon credits acting as brokers to help landowners (sellers) and companies (buyers) put a price on the actions that reduce GHG emissions or remove GHGs from the atmosphere.

The voluntary market to trade carbon offsets is quite new and mostly unregulated. Western Stock Growers Association has been collaborating with partners on Grasslands Capital X to conserve and restore grasslands by building an efficient marketplace to facilitate an exchange of grassland ecosystem services benefits. Carbon is the first ecological service (ES) showing potential to be traded.

Soil health is important in agriculture with soil organic matter (carbon) being measured as an important indicator. In the Grassland

Capital X project, three other indicators have been added to measure the health of the soil. These are soil aggregate stability, bacteria-to-fungi ratio, and a predicted abundance of soil micro-organisms.

“Carbon farming is just one initiative in the GHG mitigation marketplace,” says Graham Gilchrist, CEO of Biological Carbon Canada. “It is a new commodity. Business initiatives range from selling (buying) carbon offset, lowering your use of fossil fuels, green tag certification on building materials and eco-labels, and lowering GHG footprints on food and consumer products.”

Gilchrist suggests farm businesses apply some critical thinking to the opportunity to sell carbon credits as there are risks and rewards. Read the contracts. Understanding the new market requires new thinking. If your business is buying someone else's reduction certificate (like a green sticker on a plane ticket), seek out the project and the science behind the project. 🍁

Peg Strankman enjoys the challenge of using her communication skills to share agriculture's story to the general public and bringing consumer issues back to producers. She also became an auditor for Where Food Comes From. Her passion for the agricultural landscape resulted in a Masters exploring a land performance framework as a basis for sustainability. She grew up on a cattle and grain farm north of Oyen and currently lives just outside Airdrie.

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MEAT CANNING

EASY TO STORE AND READY TO EAT

By Lisa Caroglanian Dorazio.

Canning is trending.

Whether you're hunting, purchasing seasonal livestock or buying meat on sale, preserving meat reduces waste, ensures the best taste, retains nutritional values and prevents spoilage.

If your freezer space is limited, canning meat is a terrific option. Canned goods on hand will save you time with meal preparation and also packs nicely into your emergency preparedness pack for those unexpected winter storms, wildfires or power outages.

Step-by-step guidelines are key to focused, efficient, organized and safe canning. No shortcuts allowed.

Where you can and with whom matters not. Opting for a backwoods cabin off the grid is fine, provided you understand what you are doing and have the proper tools for the job.

Processing is heating filled jars for a specific amount of time at a specific temperature. Options for processing are either using a boiling water bath or a pressure canner. Knowing the difference is key.

Arguably a scary proposition for first-time canners, pressure canning is the most recommended method for processing meats. Generational traditions of using the water canning method without ill outcomes continue to be used and deemed safe using clean methods at lower elevations. It is riskier at higher elevations because it boils at 203°F instead of 212°F and is not a sealed canner. Further, recommendations are to boil the meat for 10 minutes or fry meat at a high temperature for 3 minutes for this method.

Alternatively, pressure canners also create steam, but the pressure is inside the "sealed" canner.

With this method, temperatures reach 240°F, killing botulism spores that can survive at lower temperatures. When the water heats up and creates steam, the pressure builds inside the canner, thus raising the temperature.

TYPES OF PRESSURE CANNERS

You have options with pressure canners. Weighted gauge or dial gauge.

The weighted gauge pressure canner comes with a weight "set" on the steam valve, usually to 5, 10 or 15 PSI. When the canner reaches that temperature, the weight "jiggles" and releases a small amount of steam, making noise. When the canner heats, you adjust the weight to "jiggle" according to instructions. This allows the canner to maintain proper temperature processing and not release too much steam. Remember to always monitor your pressure canner as per instructions. Using a dial gauge pressure canner requires you to watch the dial to regulate pressure. You are expected to stay alert when canning. Using the weighted gauge is more labour-intensive with "eyes" on the dial. You are watching the dial on top to regulate pressure ensuring the canner is above your target pressure.

SUPPLIES FOR CANNING

Organize your work area with the following:

- Recipe and Ingredients
- New Canning Jars and Lids
- Canning Jar Lifter
- Digital Thermometer
- Pressure Canner
- Paper or Cloth Towels
- Vinegar

Are you ready to get started?

Of course you are ready. Follow instructions and adjust your pressure canner as directed for altitude.

Prepare meats or meat meals as per your recipe. If raw packing, keep the meat cold until packing. Now you're ready to can.

Food safety protocols are to be adhered to strictly. Always sterilize jars and lids as directed in boiling water. Follow time and temperature requirements for meat sources as specified in canning literature. Accuracy is key.

Fill the jar leaving the recommended space at the top as per the recipe.

Always take a paper towel or cloth soaked with vinegar and wipe the jar rim before placing the lid on the jar.

Place jar in canner. Follow time/temperature guidelines. During processing, air is vented from the jars to create a strong vacuum seal. Remove jars when processing is complete, allowing for complete cooling prior to storing.

Do clean and store equipment and tools properly for future use.

Congratulations! Your canned meat is ready for storage.

Canned meat generally lasts from 2-5 years. Best practice for storing properly sealed canned foods is in your pantry or other areas, out of direct sunlight and in a dark, cool place. This protects the canned goods from oxidation and destruction of nutrients. Label the contents and date before storing. Always remember that unsealed jars should be refrigerated, frozen or put through the canning process again.

READY TO EAT

Once the container has been opened, you may see floating pieces of meat fat. That's okay – it just means your meat was fattier. You may remove particles or cook. Remember never to eat directly from the canning jar. Refrigerate leftovers. Enjoy the process! 🍁

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/home-canning-safety.html

www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/new-canning-guide-offers-info-on-a-favourite-food-preservation-method

Entrepreneur Lisa Caroglanian Dorazio loves creating in the kitchen. Family, friends and clients regularly benefit from her home-grown fruits, vegetables and spices. Lisa also enjoys volunteering, watching and/or playing sports, traditional crafting, traveling, ethnic cuisine dining, gardening and even landscaping for her friends.



FARMING

THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL FAMILIES AND THEIR BUSINESSES

Story by Dan Kerr.

There has always been a “not in my backyard” thought train between urbanites and rural dwellers.

I look at the little town of Port Hope, Ontario. Lovely spot. On the east side of the Ganaraska River is a lovely sandy beach where sun worshipers congregate on the hot days of summer. Right across the river on the west side is the uranium plant that produces the pellets for the nuclear power plant reactor coils. Nuclear hydro production makes up for 15% of Canada’s hydro; this is a very important role.

Similarly, on the south side of Highway 401 is Toronto, and on the north side is a field of corn that, in the winter, gets its spread of by-product from raising beef. The south side complains of the odour, but the north side has no option. My thoughts here are that the farms don’t encroach towards the subdivisions; it’s the other way around. It seems that we will tolerate what we want to, and as such, maybe an attitude modification might be a good idea here. Being thankful that you live in an area where food products can be purchased as fresh out of the ground as one could want is worth the occasional snoot full of aroma off the manure spreader. Of course, human nature being what it is, if you can’t smell, taste, or see it, what is there to complain about?

With over 189,874 farms in Canada covering approximately 62.2 million hectares or 6.3% of our entire land area, our farms are concentrated throughout but not limited to the Prairies, Quebec, and Southern Ontario. Over the last 50 years, we have seen farms double in size due to technological advances and mergers. I have watched just over the last decade in our area the amount of land reclamation that has progressed. Grown-over abandoned farms have been bought up and revived back to producing crops. Tree lines have been removed and fields amalgamated and tiled, giving a better operational function ability.

These are actions that are not for the faint of heart. It takes more than a desire to farm for this; it takes money with a huge risk factor. Investing your money in a bank and watching the market roller coaster is nerve-racking enough. Purchasing a quarter-million-dollar piece of equipment and having crop failure or bad weather is almost expected in farming; it puts the “well, why not” into the equation. Then there’s always the likelihood of adding a mechanical failure that could push your Geiger counter into the red zone. Today we see diesel costs pushing \$3.00 a litre. Everything heading from the farm to your table uses it, and we produce that as well, but that’s another story.

Farmers are a dedicated bunch. Take my next-door neighbour at his On a Knoll milk farm in Bruce Mines, Ontario. Dwayne Palmer’s work schedule is a 24/7 routine. You can’t just shut off the valve on a Holstein’s utter for the weekend and go fishing, or for a lockdown. It’s twice a day, every day, day after day. If he’s not fixing, he’s feeding, cleaning or repairing something to do with, as he refers to them, “the girls.” Farmers work hard because they are working for themselves and are proud of the product they produce. It’s not a product that is someone else’s responsibility to take the blame for should something go wrong; it’s theirs. They are the workers, managers, investment officers, veterinarians, mechanics, roofers, plumbers, parents, and everything, it’s their business, and they run it.

Farming is a very diverse business here in Canada which was led in 2021 by grains, oilseeds, red meat, and dairy. Bringing in a record high of 76.9 billion dollars showing a 4.7% average annual growth, with grain and oilseed leading the pack. Two-thirds of the revenue was generated by the largest 10% of farms. An average of the farm commodities from 2017-2021 show that out of the ten provinces, five had milk on the top of the list.

So how important is agriculture and food products to Canada? In 2021 we exported over 82 billion dollars in agriculture and food products, making us the 5th largest exporter in the world to more than 200 countries; the US is our largest purchaser. Not only providing us with what we need to eat, but the entire agriculture and food system in Canada also employs one out of every nine people for a total of over 2 million jobs. Yes, it is important.

It gives me a good feeling when I read that our primary agriculture farming, which is the work that is performed within the boundaries of a farm, nursery, or greenhouse, generates 1.6% of our gross domestic products at 32 billion dollars and employs approximately 242 thousand people. I am living in the right country. Another thing it does is encourage me to shop Canadian. If it’s a product that grows here and the side of the box, bag or container doesn’t say product of Canada, I choose one that does. We have acquired a status as a trusted supplier of top-quality safe food and are respected as strong stewards of the land we use.

We are very fortunate to be able to attend outdoor markets in season for fresh vegetables and fruits and should appreciate the effort it takes to get it there.

I can always tell when Dwayne’s fields are getting their fertilizer; the aroma is part and parcel with the job. At the same time, I can also tell when the laundry is out on his close line; it has to do with country life and clean air. The lack of traffic noise, sirens, and lights was something that had to be adapted to. Our houses are about a thousand feet apart, but as he says, we’re only a fence away. 🍁

Dan Kerr learned photography in his dad’s darkroom, then progressed to providing photos and articles for magazines, and crime scene photographs for the Ontario Provincial Police, as a forensic identification officer. Dan is the author of K.I.S.S. My Maintenance.



STARTING SEEDS

THE SURVIVAL GUIDE TO INDOOR GROWING

Story by Pat Kerr.

Starting seeds inside is about adding water and light. This is the same as caring for a baby by adding food and changing the diaper. Children and seedlings are as individual as indoor conditions.

Gardeners have the privilege of choice. Don't plant radishes if you want strawberries. While strawberries take longer to mature, the reward is worth the wait. Grow what you want to eat! My sister-in-law replied to this comment, "But I love radishes." It's your garden indoors and out.

Family planning is a priority. Decide whether you want your new little ones to live indoors full-time, outside seasonally, or outdoors after starting in the house.

Plants like zucchini are huge. They need space at maturity, but starting them inside provides an earlier harvest. Do your homework and read the back of the seed packages. Some tomatoes do well in pots. Others are too large for the average living room. Size does matter when growing indoors.

Our eyes adjust to lighting levels plants do not. Celery is happy in semi-shade. Keep it in a pot near a window, and it can be wonderful to pick a fresh stock for your turkey soup in December. Tomatoes and fruiting plants tend to need higher light levels.

In most Canadian homes, seedlings will need direct supplementary light during winter to get started. Without it, they will be spindly, weak, and disease prone. Along with supporting

photosynthesis, light kills many fungi, the enemy of seedlings. If your indoor plants are failing, check your lighting first. Low light is the source of many problems.

While nothing on the market completely replaces sunlight for plant growth, we have options. The old incandescent types were warm to hot. They produce more orange/red light, which is helpful for flowering. Sweet potatoes love the additional heat. Pansy, celery, and spinach do better starting with the blue light of fluorescent bulbs for leaf growth. These are the cheapest option. Upscale your lighting as the plants mature to encourage blooms or budding. LED lights have a better balance without the heat. Whatever you choose, keep the light close to the plant. Never force anything to grow too fast.

Grow bulbs are indoor gardeners' dream. They are a little pricy, but they have huge benefits. The lighting balance is better for both starting and fruiting plants. Without these, if you force strawberries in December, they must be in a south or east-facing window plus supplemental LED light.

The reduced hydro usage of LED bulbs is a bonus for gardeners who want to balance the cost of a bowl of strawberries in December with hydro bills.

Water is a second issue. Urbanites with chlorine in their water will have reduced problems with fungi and disease compared to those using untreated water. However, while chlorine inhibits disease microbes, it also

eradicates beneficial organisms. Compost tea or organic treatments are nullified when used indoors or in pots with treated water. I like to start with chlorinated water and switch to spring water with the first set of true leaves.

I bottom water to reduce issues with fungus gnats and avoid washing seeds about. However, it isn't earth-shattering or terrible to top water. Nature does it, and we call it rain.

For germination indoors, cleanliness is a priority. Plants inside need sterile soil and clean water. (Outside high light levels and wind for circulation make it a different world.) My home is not a laboratory, and my husband is not allowed to comment. To compensate, increase the light and ensure there is good to excellent ventilation. It is your home, get a humidity monitor and keep it safe for humans. Use a fan if fungus issues are potential.

Inside, away from wind and air turbulence, plants like tomatoes need a little shake to help pollination. Pumpkins and insect-pollinated plants need bees. Swirl a tiny paintbrush inside each flower.

We have a wood stove, not central heat. High humidity is not a problem. The chimney changes our air, and it does not circulate the air sufficiently. Dog's tails don't cause enough breeze. This is why I use chlorinated water to start plants. An alternative is adding a bit of hydrogen peroxide to your water for the first couple of waterings.

House plants are a concern. It isn't hard to have ornamentals covered with whiteflies, scales, or other tiny insects and not notice them. These are a catastrophe for your seedlings. The six-foot rule will not work. Deal with any outstanding issues on your plants before you start trying to germinate seedlings.

Unless you live in a mansion, space is a concern. For the first year of planting indoors, start with reused containers like plastic shells fruit comes in, eggshells, egg cartons, or anything that will drain. Once you have your feet wet, switch to the ergonomic trays. Planting indoors is addictive. You are going to need room.

Fertilizer is essential for potted plants. Start with half-strength and half the recommended rate after the first true leaves form. Increase slowly as needed. Watch the colour of the leaves. When your babies get pale, they need a boost.

Indoor gardening increases your plant palate for both food and flowering plants. I don't want Roma tomatoes. I want tiny tomatoes for salads, large ones for sandwiches, an heirloom for processing for winter, and fresh ones for Christmas. I want salad fixings in January. I also want fresh figs and sweet potatoes. I ordered my first olive tree.


My husband has suggested he can move to the garage. I took that to mean there was open space in his shop. I love my family! Now I have room for wildflowers, medicinal herbs, and crossing my own lilies. I'm feeling good, reducing the transportation costs to bring fresh produce to my home in February and loving the new selections and diversity in my flower beds. 🍁

Pat Kerr is a Master Gardener and author of two books promoting native diversity. My Tree, My Forest encourages gardeners to support their yard trees to be part of a thriving eco-system. We are Planting a Forest is a short children's pamphlet on growing native trees from seed.


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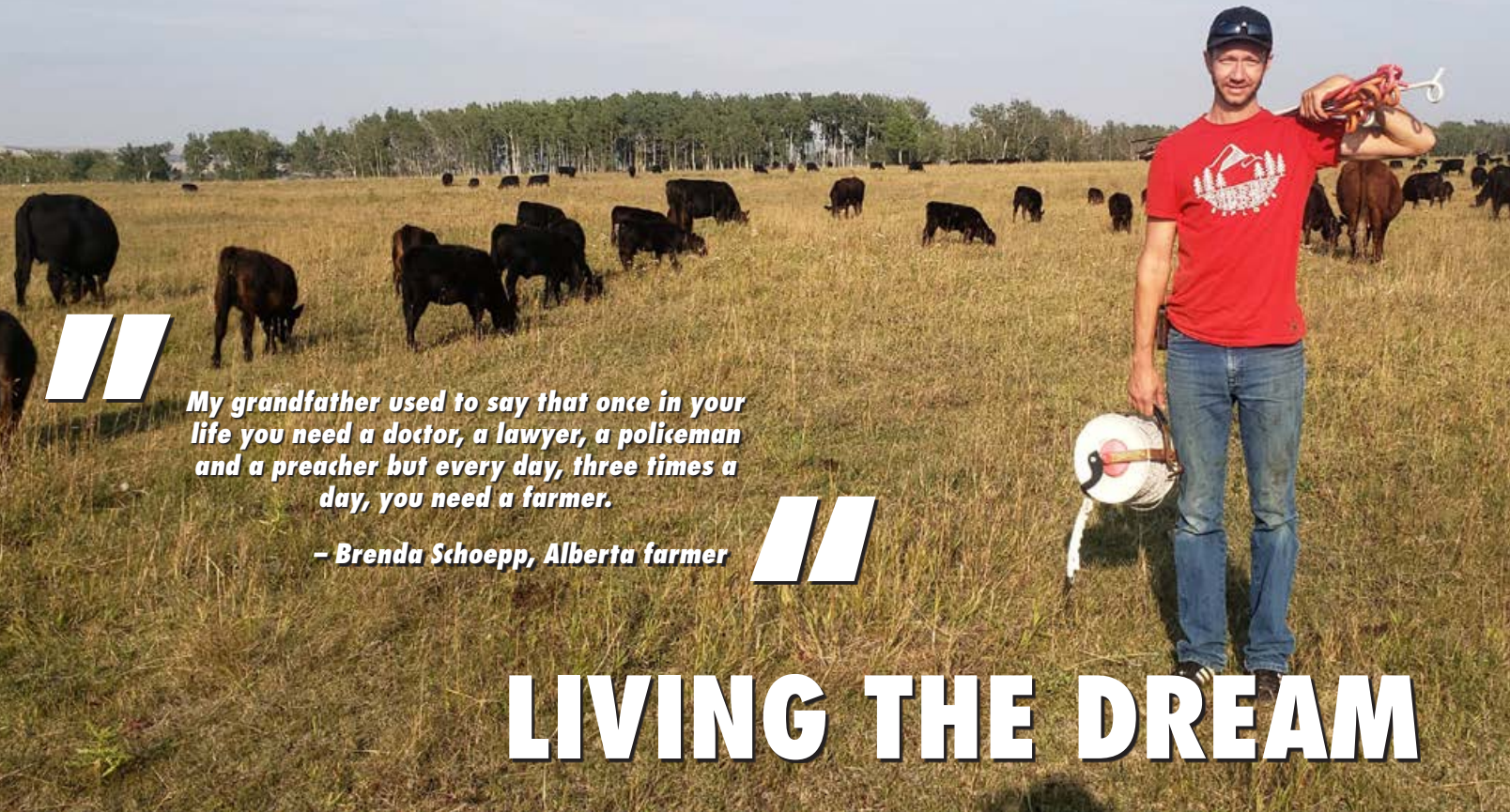
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My grandfather used to say that once in your life you need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman and a preacher but every day, three times a day, you need a farmer.

– Brenda Schoepp, Alberta farmer

”

LIVING THE DREAM

FIRST GENERATION FARMERS

Story by Kathleen Raines.

The dream of living on the land, growing your own food and being your own boss has motivated generations of farmers and helped build rural communities. In decades past, those farmers likely had an agricultural background or were no more than a generation removed from the land. Since the 1950s, though, Canada has become increasingly urbanized, with a corresponding decrease in the number of farms and farmers across the country. The 2021 Census of Agriculture (statcan.gc.ca) confirms a continuation of the demographic shift that is impacting the industry; the average Canadian farmer is 56 years old, with 60.5% of farm operators aged 55 and older, an increase of 6% from the 2016 census. At the same time, the country experiences growing food insecurity, our farm population is aging and desperately seeking labour resources.

The dream of becoming a farmer and helping to address the industry's challenges is very much alive among a segment of young Canadians, but the motivations have shifted. Alex Pulwicki is the E-Learning Coordinator with Young Agrarians (YA), a “farmer-to-farmer educational resource network” which operates across the country, and she says the new

and potential farmers she meets through YA programs are passionate about good food and driven by issues of ecological and social justice and the need for community. 68% of those new and aspiring farmers surveyed as part of a study titled *New Farmers and Food Policies in Canada (2018)* did not grow up on a farm. They face unique challenges and barriers to enter the industry, with access to land topping the list.

YA addresses that need with a land matching program in British Columbia which receives provincial funding to facilitate outreach to new farmers and landowners, and provides staff resources to negotiate leases, licenses and transition agreements. A pilot program in Alberta maintains a land access registry. The Business Bootcamp, YA's eleven-week online course, attracts up to 50 registrants per session from across Canada and as far afield as the United States, Europe and Australia. When



Photo contributed by Mich Lam (Young Agrarians).



Photo contributed by Mich Lam (Young Agrarians).

asked to define how YA measures success, Alex says that while each individual's journey is unique, the program offers a variety of channels to support them, from the online workshops to paid on-farm apprenticeships to a variety of land access, mentorship and social opportunities. The typical client is between 20 and 40 years of age, but many retirees and those investigating second careers also participate in YA programs.

Blake Hall might be considered a typical first-generation farmer. He grew up in Red Deer, Alberta and was pursuing his Red Seal carpenter certification in 2006 when he embarked on a journey of self-discovery. His goals to build his own house and grow



Photo contributed by Mich Lam (Young Agrarians).



Photo contributed by Mich Lam (Young Agrarians).

his own food led him to the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) program in Ontario where he began "building a skill set around soil, pasture management, low-stress livestock handling, and grass-based protein production." Volunteer experiences on two dozen farms across Canada and the northeastern United States confirmed his commitment to become a farmer and culminated in the purchase of a small herd of cattle in 2010. Blake completed his self-designed apprenticeship by registering in Olds College's Meat Processing Certificate program, "completing the loop from soil to grass to fat livestock to food".

Prairie Gold Pastured Meats was launched on rented land with a unique herdshare model which is similar to Community Supported Agriculture; customers pre-purchase their meat, which provides cash to offset operating

costs and reduces the need for external financing. Blake and his wife Angela were married in 2013, and were fortunate to secure a seven-year lease on land which "really helped us get ahead." The cattle herd grew with market demand, and 100% of production was sold through the herdshare program in Red Deer, Calgary and Canmore.

Blake advises prospective farmers to set clear goals for the financial resources and land base they need and the quality of life they want to achieve. Infrastructure investments on rented land need to be portable. Direct marketing has been critical to the success of Prairie Gold Meats, allowing them to set prices relative to costs of production. Communication skills are also essential to establish and maintain relationships with landowners, customers, family members and business connections. "Create trust, act with integrity and transparency," he says. With 10 years of experience and success as farmers, Blake and Angela were able to purchase 40 acres of their own in 2019. The future of Prairie Gold Meats continues to evolve with Blake working off-farm as a butcher and the herd being downsized to fit their land base.

Alex shares Blake's non-farm background and started learning about food and farming in a community garden during university. That "fun, impactful" experience inspired her to explore a "slippery slope" of farm tours followed by an on-farm apprenticeship working with dairy goats. She would love to see more young people on farms with interlinked models—perhaps a market gardener, beekeeper and grazer sharing the same land base—and is excited by land trust and co-operative models that are being developed to offer new farmers secure tenure.

Does the next generation of farmers need to own land? With Farm Credit Canada reporting a "national average farmland increase of 8.3% in 2021, compared to 5.4% in 2020, and similar moderate increases for the previous five years"



in their 2021 National FCC Farmland Values Report, tenancy seems the most likely path to success for today's new farmers. Successful first-generation farmers like the Halls, supported by innovative programs like Young

Agrarians, are shaping the future of Canada's agriculture industry as it evolves to meet the demand for responsibly grown food and ethical food systems. The dream is alive and growing well. 🍁

Kathleen Raines raises sheep and works with a committed group of volunteers as project coordinator for Taste of Markerville.



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CHICKEN RAISING

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW

Story by Mary MacArthur.

Some of the earliest pictures in Edith Tabler's family photo album are of her toddling around the laying hen pen.

The desire to be around chickens began as a child and was rekindled in 2000 when Tabler wanted a direct connection to the food on her table.

"The whole goal was to build a farm-to-table presence," said Tabler, of TME Farms, of Rosalind, AB.

One of the keys to a successful chicken operation, she has learned—either raising broilers for meat or laying hens for eggs—is to use your existing facilities and equipment. When Tabler began 23 years ago, she turned an old wooden granary into her first chicken coop. She incorporated an existing caragana hedge into a safe area where the laying hens could peck for bugs or hide from birds. The caraganas act as ideal cover for the birds on a hot day or protection from overhead predators like owls and hawks. When the birds see the flying predators, they race into the bushes for safety.

New chicken owners must also be honest about how much time they want to commit to raising chickens. Raising broiler birds for meat takes roughly 12 weeks from the time they

arrive until they are ready for slaughter. There is no need to worry about insulated buildings or frozen water bowls.

Raising hens for eggs is a full-time commitment, each day, all year long, and new chicken farmers must be prepared for the daily chores.

Carolyn Herbert agrees. "They do need care on a daily basis. You will need someone to do chores if you want to go away. It is a daily responsibility that if you want to have them, you must provide for them."

Herbert of Herbert Family Farms in Edberg, AB., began raising broilers about 20 years ago when she couldn't find large chickens to feed her growing family. Then one of the children became interested in raising specialty laying hens that laid colourful eggs, and just like that, they were in the chicken business.

"From there, we just continued to add chickens. We hatched some of our birds and bought some from the hatchery."

Herbert loves the colourful, odd-looking birds with feathers on their feet or bright arrangements of feathers that give eggs each day. For broilers, she buys whatever fast-growing broiler chicks the hatchery sells.

Over the years, Tabler has finally landed on her favourite breeds of chickens for her farm. She prefers the Cornish Giant for meat production. These large birds give high-quality meat perfect for the dinner table. But, Tabler said, they are not the easiest birds to raise. Chicken producers must follow the detailed directions from the hatchery on how to raise these birds exactly.

"With Cornish Giants, there is very little room for deviation."

When the hatchery says to ensure the temperature is kept at 32°C for four to five days with no drafts, that is not negotiable. The feed ration must also be followed exactly as outlined for the birds to live and grow. Follow your hatchery rules. The hatchery posts the rules for a reason."

There is a bit more wiggle room for the diet of a laying hen once they are grown. Tabler raises heritage birds of mixed genetics for her laying hens. The no-name mixed breed is hardy with a good ability to forage, has coloured eggs and her customers tell her they like the taste of the eggs from these hens.

While these hens are given access to a laying hen ration year-round, they also eat vegetable

scraps and forage in the yard for fly larvae and other bugs in the summer.

Tabler recommends buying species-specific feed and watering equipment to save money on wasted feed and make sure the birds always have good access to feed and water.

“If you have a ton of feed waste, it becomes very expensive, and that can be very discouraging. You need to provide access to a balanced, nutritious grain ration; scraps are extra.”

Herbert also feeds her chickens kitchen or garden scraps of fruit and vegetables past their prime. While it is a nice way to compost and recycle vegetable scraps, it doesn't give the birds enough energy to grow or lay eggs on their own. The birds need a complete balanced ration with scraps as a supplement.

For beginners just starting out, Tabler recommends beginning with 20 to 25 laying hens for personal use. Any more hens and the number of eggs and the workload becomes overwhelming.

To prevent hens from laying eggs on the ground, chickens should have access to laying boxes about a month before they start laying. Small wire cages on wheels that act as moveable pens in the summer are a good way to give the animals access to fresh grass. Some moveable cages can also be made with laying boxes.

Herbert said they were lucky. Their farm had an old chicken barn that just needed a few renovations when they began raising laying hens. She said it is important to keep the area, including the laying boxes, clean and full of fresh shavings or straw and safe from predators. In the country, predators are real and must be taken seriously.

Tabler uses a combination of enclosed buildings and electric net fencing to contain the birds and prevent predators from getting access to birds. “I take predation pretty seriously. Make sure predators never have success. Prevent that first kill. I lock everything in at night. That is part of my success in stopping the first predation events.”



A good dog that scares away coyotes and other animals is important, but the dog must also not kill the birds.

“Our dogs hate those electric fences. We need to remember that even our pets are predators. Learn the pieces of your ecosystem. Understand your ecosystem and what each predator could do with that,” said Tabler.

Herbert said they have a dog to keep the four-legged predators away. They also keep a few roosters to keep away smaller predators and to act as an early warning siren for birds.

“The roosters are very protective of their hens. They give a warning call and then hens will run into buildings or scatter in the trees. A few roosters is a very good alarm system.”

In Alberta, producers can slaughter their own birds or use a mobile butcher if the birds are used for their own consumption. If the birds

are going to be sold, farmers can apply to the provincial government to slaughter their own birds and sell them, but only as whole birds, not cut in pieces. Birds sold at a Farmers Market or similar outlet must be slaughtered in a provincially inspected facility. 🍁

When Mary MacArthur isn't writing stories about agriculture she is busy mowing grass and pulling weeds on her central Alberta acreage. An avid hiker, Mary is hiking the Great Divide Trail from Waterton, on the US border to Kakwa Falls, near Grande Prairie. Mary can also be found running down the gravel roads trying to stay in shape and train for future races.

*Do you want to share your agricultural family's story? If so, we'd certainly be interested in considering you for the next issue's **Rural Spotlight**. Please contact Marketing@PeaveyIndustries.com with your information.*

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INTERIOR PAINTING

OPEN THOSE WINDOWS AND START SOMETHING NEW

By Myrna Pearman.

I had the good fortune, after graduating from high school, to get a summer job as a house painter's assistant. I learned enough over that summer to launch my own painting business for a few years. Over the decades since, I have enjoyed painting my own home, our rental properties, and have often helped friends and family with painting projects. I still enjoy basking in the beauty and freshness of a newly painted room!

It has been my experience that many people assume that painting is easy and can be tackled with no previous experience. The messes I've encountered prove that this isn't so! While painting doesn't require the high level of expertise and training required of some other trades (e.g., electricians), it does take knowledge and skill.

The following are tips for the inexperienced who want to tackle their own painting project. If you have space/rooms with dark colours, contrasting trim and high ceilings, for example, it might be best to hire a professional. Some mistakes may be

irreversible – e.g., touching a white ceiling with dark wall paint, sloshing on trim/baseboards, and spilling paint on carpet. If you decide to contract out the work, get referrals and conduct background checks. Meet with them to do a consult, get a quote (three quotes are better than one), and get a written contract before the work begins.

Whether or not you get a contractor or do the work yourself, take the time to plan your project. A full-house repaint will result in more chaos than simply doing one room at a time. Whatever the size and scale, be sure to work through all the steps necessary to ensure success.

If you are inexperienced, there are several preliminary steps that can be taken to reduce the mess, frustration and inevitable delays. The best part of repainting is of course choosing the colours and colour combinations, a task that can be made easier (or more difficult!) by perusing the colour chips and colour combination templates that line the shelves at paint stores. Those who can

afford it might want to hire a colour consultant for advice. Just remember that colour choice is only one small part of a do-it-yourself painting project.

A good first step is to go to your local paint store and ask for assistance. Do not base your paint purchasing decision only on the price of the paint. Patronizing stores that have helpful and knowledgeable staff, even if the price of the paint is higher, will pay dividends in terms of assistance and troubleshooting.

Older homes may have trim, and even walls, that were painted with oil-based paints. Interior latex paints have replaced oil-based products, but cheaper latex paints might not adhere properly to the underlying oil-based finish. Special preparations—such as washing with trisodium phosphate (TSP), roughing up surfaces with sandpaper, or the use of special primers—might be required before the topcoat of latex can be applied. Some paints will cover drywall patches without being primed; others will need to be lightly brushed with a thin layer of primer before top coating.



Other preliminary preparations might include removing wallpaper (which will require specific techniques depending on what type of paper and glue was used), making sure that all the necessary repairs are completed, and that all paintable surfaces are clean. Some walls may not need cleaning while others (e.g., kitchen walls) will need to be thoroughly washed first.

Rare is the home that doesn't require at least some repair work, from tiny nail and picture hanger holes, to larger spots where the drywall has been banged or otherwise damaged. Damaged walls will show the imperfections, no matter what type of paint is used! Major damage, such as holes, may require special repairs, but in most cases, patching is all that is required.

There are two keys to good patching: use a good quality drywall mud that dries quickly and is easy to sand, and apply only thin layers at a time. It is better to apply and sand two or three times, than to try to deal with a large blob that is very difficult to sand down. Again, your paint store experts can advise as to the best filler and sandpaper products to use.

Paint stores/departments also carry the proper painting equipment. No matter the size of your project, you will need to first purchase or borrow an appropriate ladder(s). If you have stairs and high-ceiling entry ways to paint, you will need to use an extension ladder. For rooms of standard height, a small but sturdy step ladder will suffice.

If you are just doing one small unlit room or closet, it isn't critical to have a good-quality brush and roller, or extra-sturdy roller cages and handles. But for large projects, getting a good quality cage and handle—complemented by a good brush and a good quality roller of adequate pile depth—will make it easier to apply the paint evenly and precisely.

Painting ceilings is, in my opinion, the least pleasant part of any home painting project. The paint type will depend on the ceiling finish (e.g., stipple vs spackle) so be sure to get advice from your paint store before choosing the product. In most cases, a thick-piled roller sleeve will be needed as will a long handle to attach to the cage. Be sure to cover every square metre of floor space and furniture to protect against drips and splatters. And wear a hat!

Taping off casings and baseboards (trim) is a tedious but important task. If the trim won't be repainted, carefully tape along the trim-wall edges with a high-quality painter's tape. Be sure to work slowly and carefully, pressing the tape evenly and precisely along the edge to make sure that no paint seeps under the tape. Remove the tape as soon as the painting is completed and remove any seepage (if wet, use a damp cloth; if dry, some scraping or touching up with the casing/baseboard colour might be required).

If the trim is to be repainted, but with a different colour, extra care must be taken. It is best to paint all the trim first: touching the walls won't be an issue since the walls will be painted later. Once the trim paint is dry, tape them off before the wall painting commences. Tape should also be placed along the floor to prevent getting any paint on the flooring.

Once the trim is painted, it is time for the final (and most exciting!) step: painting the walls! The proper order is to cut in first with a brush, then roller the walls. Cutting in involves carefully brushing at the top edge, just below the ceiling, and along all the trim. It is not usually possible to tape off a ceiling, so great care must be taken to avoid touching it.

After all the edges have been cut in (usually two coats are required), pour the paint into the roller tray and start rolling. Practice with the amount of material required as well as how many passes are needed to leave the

paint smooth. It is better to apply two thinner coats, especially if the new and old colours are different, than one thicker coat. If you are nervous, start with a small, less important room before tackling large rooms where sunlight has an uncanny ability to reveal inconsistencies and poor workmanship.

Make sure that the floors and furniture are protected. Commercial drop cloths can be used, but even old sheets work well for covering furniture. Move what furniture you can out of the room, then push the large items into the middle so you have space to work around the edges.

Drop cloths or old sheets or pieces of plastic can also be used to protect the floor, but over the years, we have found that 2-metre-long strips of 1-metre-wide sturdy, flat cardboard works the best. Two pieces can be easily moved along the wall as you work while the paint can and tray can be placed on a third. Cardboard is easier to drag along flooring than either drop cloths or plastic.

Be sure to keep a wet rag (an old microfiber cloth works great) handy so that spills and spatter can be quickly and easily removed. Never let spatters dry, as they will become difficult or even impossible to remove.

There are also plenty of online resources, including YouTube and company websites that can be consulted for additional tips and how-to guidance.

Good luck with your painting projects! 🍁

Myrna Pearman is a retired biologist and an enthusiastic nature photographer and writer. She has authored and co-authored several books, and is a columnist for The Red Deer Advocate, Nature Alberta and The Gardener. She was recently recognized as a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS) and is an RCGS Travel Ambassador. She retired from Ellis Bird Farm in 2019, after spending 33 years spearheading several conservation, research and education programs. She is currently the Resident Naturalist at Mother Nature's Seeds, maintains a blog on her website (www.myrnapearman.com), and spearheads a program to document natural areas in Central Alberta (www.naturecentral.org).



LOVELY LEMON BARS

SUBTLE, LIGHT AND REFRESHING

Recipe by Mary MacArthur.

RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

BASE

- ¾ cup butter, softened
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

TOPPING

- 4 eggs
- 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
- 2 tbsp finely grated lemon rind
- ½ cup lemon juice
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp icing sugar

DIRECTIONS

Nothing says spring like these pale-yellow bars bursting with refreshing flavour. Cut into tiny pieces for a light bite or go for a larger slice and satisfy your sweet tooth.

Line 13 X 9-inch metal cake pan with parchment paper, leaving some paper over the edge to help lift out the bars at the end. Set aside.

In a bowl, beat together butter, sugar and salt until light and fluffy. Stir in flour in two additions. Press evenly into the prepared pan. Bake in the centre of a 325 F oven for about 35 minutes until golden. Let cool in pan on rack.

Topping: Meanwhile, in a bowl, beat eggs with sugar until pale and thickened. Beat in lemon rind and juice, flour and baking powder. Pour over the baked base spreading evenly. Bake for 25 to 30

minutes until golden brown and centre is set. Let cool in pan on rack. Dust with icing sugar. Using the parchment paper, lift out of the pan and peel off the paper. Cut into squares and enjoy.

CALORIES*	203 kcal
PROTEIN*	2.7 g
FAT*	8 g (10%)
TOTAL CARBS*	31.4 g (11%)
FIBRE*	0.5 g (2%)
SUGAR*	20.5 g
SODIUM*	94 mg (4%)
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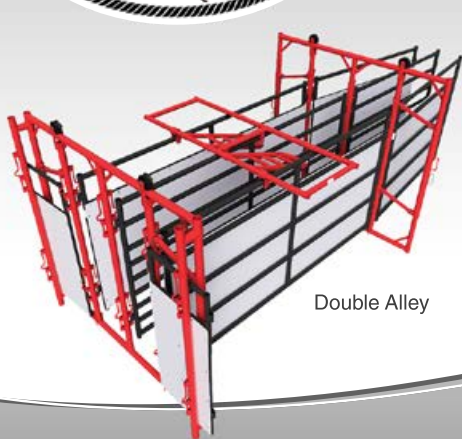


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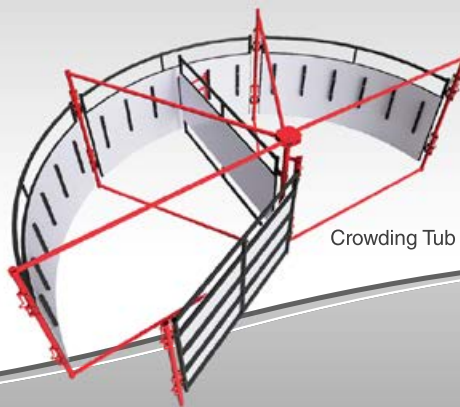


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CALORIES*	244 kcal
PROTEIN*	7.3 g
FAT*	7.7 g
TOTAL CARBS*	38.3 g
FIBRE*	4 g
SUGAR*	3.4 g
SODIUM*	800 mg

* may vary depending on specific ingredients & brands used.

INGREDIENTS

- 8–10 medium yellow or red potatoes, boiled and peeled
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and halved
- 2 stalks celery, washed and thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp chopped chives or green onion
- Handful of fresh dill, roughly chopped, stems removed
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup Miracle Whip
- 3 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- Handful of fresh parsley and dill for garnish

SPRING POTATO SALAD

FRESH AND DELICIOUS

Recipe by Angie Rodgers.

RECIPE

DIRECTIONS

As the weather warms up and fresh produce starts to make its way into our kitchens, there's nothing quite like a refreshing potato salad to satisfy our cravings for something light and satisfying. This spring potato salad recipe is the perfect balance of creamy and crunchy, with tender potatoes, crisp celery, and a tasty dressing that's sure to please. Whether you're planning a picnic or just looking for a healthy side dish, this salad is a delicious way to welcome the season.

1. Combine mayonnaise, Miracle Whip, Dijon mustard, salt and pepper in a bowl.
2. Add boiled egg yolks and mash into dressing. Combine well.
3. Chop egg whites and stir into dressing.
4. Add chives and dill.
5. Dice potatoes into small cubes and add to dressing, along with celery.
6. Adjust sauces and seasonings to taste.
7. Refrigerate for up to two days. Add sprig of dill and parsley on the top and serve.

Angie has been a glass artist since 2008, and was lucky to land a position as an editor and writer for the American publisher Glass Patterns Quarterly. She is the copy editor/associate editor for The Flow®, proofreader for Glass Art® and Glass Patterns Quarterly®, and contributing writer for Glass Art® and The Flow®. She also works as a freelance writer and editor specializing primarily in the arts and non-fiction publications. She has too many pets and needs a lot of naps.

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