

Between the Rows

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October Dreams

The long 162 game baseball season is a metaphor for the growing season. Every year we start in spring training in Arizona (where many farmers are in March), Seed the crop with great fanfare, our opening day, and all our yield potential is ready for the season.

The team wins a few games, gets a streak going, just as our fields get some April and May showers. The crop emerges just like that heralded rookie with All-Star potential that made the club. With the great conditions the crop stand flourishes early on and the team stays within striking distance of the division leader. That rookie is batting .325 with 10 homers and 26 RBI's at the end of May. The canola stand is 3-4 leaves and ahead of the weeds, ready for its first test, in-crop herbicide application as we approach mid-June that same day our rookie phenom is facing the wily old veteran pitcher that he homered off 2 weeks ago. The pitcher changes up his strategy, high fast balls instead of low breaking stuff. The "kid" handles it and goes 1-3 with a SAC fly. Our crop has also handled the herbicide application as well, and is now set to take off.

It's June 25th, wait, it hasn't rained now since June 3 and suddenly our rookie phenom is in the middle of a 0-16 stretch, fanning several times on the high fast ball and worse, the team is in a 2-12 stretch. The high heat is also wilting our canola, leaves are curled up by early afternoon every day. We just need rain, he just needs a base hit. Now it's July 5th, +35°C in a canola field in full bloom, 3 weeks since it last rained. This is bad, very bad. The rookie has now been benched and might be sent off to the minors. Then, lightning strikes, as in "The Natural", thunderstorms roll in, the good kind, no hail, the game is rained out and the kid takes his mind off his streak. The team frolics in the "rain" like in "Bull Durham". The stress is gone from the crop as well. It may not fully recover it's initial potential but there it is. Hope. The team still has a chance at a wild card, this crop may still make 40 bu/ac.

We hit the dog days of August, both player and crop have been through the ringer. A couple 30°C days, but we are still good, the evenings are cooling off. The rookie seems to thrive in the crisp late summer nights and puts together .300 month. A few frost scares, the odd bertha, the inside fastball that clipped the rookie's forearm But both the crop and the player are making it through. The canola has a chance to reset, access the nutrients from the soil and the foliar micros with the fungicide application. The crop can use that protection, just like our rookie that took

that fastball on the elbow. The elbow on which the crusty old manager insisted that he wear a protective pad. Elbow fine. Crop fine. The team has righted itself again and makes it through August just 2 games back of a wild card spot. Still a chance.

Early September goes by quickly. The passing of the season has brought a new sense of maturity to the crop and the rookie. Both know what to expect. The crop slowly turns from green to straw, it's potential being passed on to the next generation. The rookie has now played in 150 games, he knows the pitchers, he knows his strengths and weaknesses. We just need to get to October.

It's the last week of September, the crop is probably half a week from a pre-harvest application. A hard frost is in the forecast. the team is 2 games out with 3 to go. Long odds. For both. The wise old farmer stands by his crop, he may have to swath, but if could just hold on a week the last few pods will mature. That cranky old baseball manager is so close to his dreams. Game 1 of the final series of the season sees his team score 5 runs in the 3rd inning (3 from the rookie's long ball) and they cruise. For the farmer, unforecasted clouds roll in at 5pm and the temperature stays around 1°C. What he wouldn't give now for a couple of the unwanted extra degrees we had in July now to get the crop through. The team is now 1 game out, the crop 2 nights.

Night 2. Drizzle and wind blow through the day, miserable, but by game time its beginning to clear, wind picking up. This doesn't look good. Bottom of the ninth, rookie at bat, team down by 1, farmer still at the ready to swath, a high hard fastball, CRACK. He connects, the force of which changes the wind direction and the temperature actually rises that night. Safe again.

We're now tied going into game 162. If the crop can get through tonight were looking at no green seed, no sacrificed yield and a dry crop. The drama is so thick you can cut it with a knife. But sometimes drama isn't all its cracked up to be. The sun rose on that last fateful day of the season and warmed the earth, the field and the diamond. Bathing in its glow the rookie flexed his bat, drove 2 into the bleachers and by sunset they were in the playoffs. The crop had took advantage of the 25C weather and it was done too. Tomorrow the crop would be combined, the team would fly to Los Angeles.

They had both made it to October.

2024 Canola King and Queen

Welcome to the Team: Sharith Nanayakkara

2024 Canola King and Queen Contest



More details to come out in next weeks Between the Rows.

Welcome to the Team: Sharith Nanayakkara

Hello, everyone! I'm Sharith Nanayakkara, the new Sales Agronomist at CropMaxx here in Fort Vermilion. With a background in agronomy and hands-on experience in crop science, I'm here to help our producers get the most from their land through smart, tailored solutions. I may be new to the area, but I'm excited to dig into the unique challenges and opportunities here. Moving from Winnipeg to this beautiful region, I'm excited to connect, learn about local challenges, and work closely with you all. Looking forward to growing our local agriculture together and building strong, long-lasting relationships between the rows.



Weed of the Year: Volunteer Canola

Review of 2024 Trends to Watch

2024 Weed of the Year: *Volunteer Canola*

Now has come the time every farmer up here is waiting for... My naming of the 2024 Weed of the Year. Last year Lamb's Quarters took the prize, but this year, making an awesome comeback from the year before is...Volunteer Canola!

Volunteer canola started strong right out the box in 2024, with it taking advantage of the ideal spring conditions we had early. Getting ahead of the pack (and the crop) by the time we hit in-crop herbicide timing, volunteer canola was fast approaching the 4-6 leaf stage, stressing herbicides that normally can control it when its small and that's the key to controlling volunteer canola: get it early. 30-40 acres/jug of MCPA Ester will nail it at 2-3 leaf, but after it cabbages out, forget it.

And speaking of comebacks...volunteer canola re-surged after harvest, especially after peas. The problem with that is the volunteer canola is not only using up nutrients, but also soil moisture. It is nice to have something growing in the field after early harvest right? Keeps the soil microb humming along? Wrong. Canola is not 'soil microb friendly', I rather see wild oats than canola, plus if you harvested your peas in early August, that volunteer canola may even make seed.

So next year let's push volunteer canola off the track so it can't win again.

BTW: If you want to see something amusing watch the AgPhD "Weed of the Week" segment from September 27, 2019. The segment deals with RR volunteers and at the 1:14-1:19 minute mark they show a couple of picture intending to be canola, but instead show wild mustard and tansy.

[Bing Videos](#)

Review of "Trends to Watch in 2024"

Last Fall in the final edition of Between the Row 2023 I stated some Trends to Watch in 2024". Well now I am going to review these and see what actually happened in 2024.

Trend #1: Snow. Well did of course get snow, and back in November 2023 it was looking good. However the total amount we did get was below the long term average. Rainfall in September prior to the snow did definitely help our overall soil moisture levels.

Trend #2: Even Emergence. We did actually have a very good spring and crop emergence was definitely better in 2024 than 2023. But what happened in late June and early July really hammered our crops.

Trend #3: Insect pests. My biggest worry going into 2024 was that we were on the leading edge of a Bertha Armyworm outbreak. Well that didn't happen. We still had a few pockets of issues, but the general outbreak, like we saw in the early 2000's didn't come.

Trend #4: Fertilizer availability. Last fall there was general concern that low water levels in the Mississippi would effect supply. Fast forward a few months and areas in along the Mississippi had flooding. So low water didn't hamper fertilizer availability.

Trend #5: World Market instability. This continues as wars do around the world.

Trend #6: Perennial Weeds. The increase in late fall herbicide applications did in fact reduce perennial weed issues, and this fall was also good for late application so I see the trend of good control continuing.

Trend #7: Deep Tillage Operations. Coming off the dry spring of 2023 I was worried that deep tillage operation would dry out the top layers in the soil. April and May moisture prevented that from happening.

Trend #8: Supply Chain Issues. Last season (2 years post-Covid) many of the supply chain issues has resolved themselves, and post-Covid inflation is under control.

Trend #9: Interest Rates. The did drop and hopefully will continue to do so.

Trend #10: The Oilers did bounce back from a slow start and of course made it to the Finals, and if you saw the docuseries on Prime you saw Conner's desire to win. Can we get back and win it this time?

Next week I'll post my 2025 Trends to Watch.

**Fort Vermilion
Through Time
by Courtney
Jankowski:**

Fort Vermilion Through Time *By Courtney Jankowski*

The Hamlet of Fort Vermilion was founded in 1788 as a post for the North West Company. Furs, hides and provisions were traded between settlers and the local Aboriginal people.

Riverboats played a key role in early development of the area as laborers manually pulled goods up past Vermilion Chutes to be placed on boats allowing them to continue to their destinations. This practice came to an end with the introduction of the local railway and bridges, which increased the area's ability to transport materials easier.



Because of Fort Vermilion's thriving trade, in 1905 the hamlet had great influence on the political decision to create Alberta's northern boundary on the 60 degrees north latitude. It was also the first settlement to receive a hospital, servicing the entire municipality of that would later become Mackenzie County.



Fort Vermilion is home to several historical buildings including the Hudson's Bay trading post and office, St. Germain House, and a trapper's shack

Farming is Funny *by Courtney Jankowski*

**Farming is
Funny
by Courtney
Jankowski**

How do you get a farm girl to like you?

A tractor.

Why did the farmer want to bury all of his money?

To make the soil rich.

What do you call a cow sleeping at the farm?

A bull-dozer.