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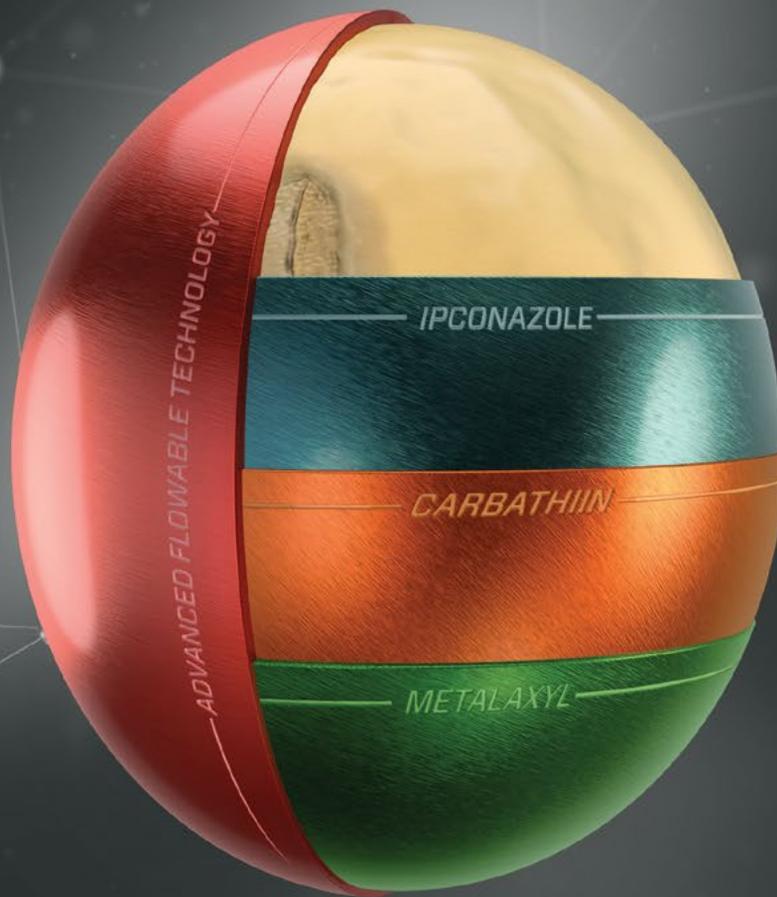
CAAR COMMUNICATOR

PUBLISHED BY THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF AGRI-RETAILERS

LOOKING FORWARD

CAAR YEAR
IN PREVIEW

Opportunities
with Ag Tech



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Adapting to Change



Theresa Bolton
Board Chair

So much can change in a year. In February 2020, I thought I had a pretty clear idea of what was ahead of me as far as my agriculture-focused career went. I had just left my position as a corporate director of recruitment with a national line company and joined a recruiting firm, specializing in all aspects of agriculture shortly after.

As the 2020 CAAR Conference and AGM were underway, I was nominated for the CAAR board chair position after serving on the board for several years as vice-chair and chairing various committees, including the executive committee.

I believed in the year ahead I would be on the path to greater success in my career as a professional recruiter and in agriculture with my exciting new role as board chair. A month later, COVID-19 spread across the world drastically changing the way organizations managed their business.

As the days turned into weeks and weeks into months, hiring new employees became “only as necessary” for many companies. By the fall, in response to a changing market, I felt an evolution needed to occur and decided to leave my position as a senior search consultant with the recruiting firm I had joined.

That evolution has led me to launch my own talent acquisition management business, in which I will be providing clients a new solution to managing their recruitment needs. I will also be casting a wider net, providing this service beyond the ag sector.

This decision led me to evaluate my role with CAAR and the time I will be able to commit to the association while launching a startup. As I am sure you can appreciate, when I consider the time I know it will take to build my new venture, there won't be much left to fulfill my duties as board chair. This, coupled with the fact that the business will not strictly be focused on the agriculture sector, has led me to the decision to resign from my position on the CAAR board of directors.

Being a part of CAAR has been an amazing experience, with many

opportunities to participate in ag industry events, including attending conferences in Banff, Winnipeg and Saskatoon. I witnessed the departure of Delaney Ross Burtneck, former CAAR President, and spearheading the recruitment for a new executive director producing the hiring of Mitch Rezanoff.

I also said goodbye to Lynda Nicol, former director of member services for CAAR, and welcomed Scott Van Alstyn to his role. I've watched Lady Gabilo's hard work and commitment over the past five years recognized, as she now serves in a management position. Last, but not least, Lisa Defoort was blessed with the birth of her daughter, who made a very timely entrance to the world during the Winnipeg conference.

I have seen the priorities and pillars of CAAR evolve in 2020. I watched the resilient CAAR team respond to the COVID-19 outbreak by adopting a virtual platform for the 2021 CAAR Conference, among a whole host of other challenges last year.

CAAR has always been and always will be an important voice for Canadian ag retailers, one that I hope none of our members forget. The association's values and mission remain true today: an association that protects the interests of ag retail and provides information, education and resources to retailer members.

I have learned a lot from serving on the CAAR board of directors, and it has been an honour to be part of such a strong and important association. I have also been fortunate to have made some great friends from the many people in the ag retail industry that I have had the pleasure of meeting.

Thank you to my fellow board members, the CAAR staff and all of you – our members – for allowing me to serve on such an important association serving a vital industry. ♦

Sincerely,

Theresa Bolton
Board Chair

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CAAR Needs You in 2021



Mitch Rezansoff
Executive Director

Many of the issues people working in Canadian agriculture faced for the majority of 2020 will continue for at least the next six to nine months. Social distancing and limitations on face-to-face business activities will continue until most citizens that seek to be vaccinated have successfully done so.

Canadian agriculture responded efficiently and effectively to the disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Business carried on throughout the supply chain to ensure spring planting was completed on time and harvest completed without undue delay, but not without trepidation and sacrifice.

Adjustments and cancellations occurred with many agriculture trade shows and tours, forcing organizers to seek novel means to deliver through virtual events. These relied heavily on technology and at times there was frustration from the lack of high-speed internet connectivity in rural Canada.

It remains to be seen if the new wave of virtual meetings, trade shows and tours will be the new ag information-transfer standard, a short-term anomaly or an evolving hybrid moving forward. Will we see the return of in-person events? The social aspect of these events remains popular with farmers and will continue to be. How this is accomplished remains to be identified.

We are a week away from the 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference: Educate. Engage. Evolve., followed by the 2021 Virtual CAAR AGM hosted in early spring. CAAR has had to evolve as well as a result of COVID-19 restrictions and we are excited to provide platforms that increase the ability for a larger diverse audience.

Canadian agriculture production, including plant breeder rights, sustainable production practice evidence, traceability, carbon taxes, input usage and production practice reviews, tariffs and market access disruptions and social opinion vs science-based regulations will continue to experience aggressive review and oversight by parties at regional, national and international levels.

Canadian agriculture will be at a crossroads in 2021. What is critical is ensuring the voices of the Canadian agriculture industry are heard. Farmers, ag retailers, manufacturers and suppliers will be directly impacted by proposed legislations in development and at public consultations.

At stake is the global competitiveness of Canadian agriculture production. As an export nation, we are a price

taker of ag commodities. This includes grains, oilseeds and fertilizers. We do not have the luxury to pass added costs onto consumers and export customers.

There is an opportunity for the ag industry to influence direction. My challenge to all members and the ag retail industry is to become engaged with CAAR, ensuring your input is heard and captured to direct solutions that work for all levels of agriculture production. The opportunity is now. **CAAR needs you today.**

I look forward to speaking with you directly and hearing your comments and requests. ✨

Thank you,

Mitch Rezansoff
Executive Director, CAAR

HOW CAN AG RETAILERS BECOME BETTER ENGAGED WITH CAAR?

- Become a member of CAAR
- Participate on one of the CAAR committees. Share your opinion and knowledge and help direct the association
- Become a board member. CAAR members can nominate you to stand for election to one of the open CAAR board seats
- Talk to a CAAR board member or staff to share critical issues affecting your ag retail business
- Advise CAAR staff of business activities that could be featured in the CAAR Communicator

Go to caar.org to learn more about how ag retailers can become better engaged with CAAR or email info@CAAR.org to request more information about joining CAAR, a committee or the board of directors.

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Get to know the CAAR Board:

Michael Gaumont and Russ Reich

The CAAR Communicator sits down for a Q&A with Michael Gaumont, vice president of operations at McEwen's Fuels and Fertilizers, and Russ Reich, vice president of crop inputs at Richardson International, to learn about their journey through the ag retail industry and involvement with the CAAR board.



Michael Gaumont

Q: What is your current role in the ag retail sector, and can you give us a little background on your ag retail journey?

Michael Gaumont: I am vice president of operations and partner at McEwen's Fuels and Fertilizers, an eight-location independent retailer operating north of Edmonton. I am also the current chairman of AgLink Canada.

Russ Reich: I am the vice president of crop inputs at Richardson International. I have spent 19 years with Richardson, working in various roles within the Pioneer network, from grain merchant to area marketing rep. I have spent the last nine years in management as senior director for zone two (southwest Saskatchewan, southern Alberta), the assistant vice president for Richardson Pioneer based out of Regina, and now Winnipeg, in my current role.

Q: What does working in the agriculture sector mean to you personally?

MG: Providing a valued service to the agriculture industry and offering solutions to growers to allow them to be profitable and sustainable.

RR: Helping to feed the world is exciting and there is never a dull moment when you have a career in Canadian agriculture. I am grateful to be working daily with great people be it our valued customers, staff, suppliers or industry associations like CAAR.

Q: If you had the power to change one thing about agriculture in Canada, no questions asked, what would it be?

MG: Public perception of modern farming practices and the value our growers bring to society.

RR: Defunct the myths about Canadian agriculture production that many are led to believe.

Q: From your perspective, what is the role of CAAR in today's agriculture environment?

MG: Strive to advocate on the agricultural sector to allow us and our growers the ability to use tools and scientific technologies that will allow Canadian agriculture to compete on the world stage.

RR: To bolster collaboration amongst industry partners to continue to drive us ahead today and position ag retail for the future.

Q: Why did you join the CAAR board and how do you apply your industry expertise to the work you do with the board?

MG: As a new board member this year, I hope to contribute valuable input as an independent ag retailer to ensure other Canadian retailers feel confident that their operations will have a viable future.

RR: I joined the board to show Richardson's support of CAAR and to lend my perspective to CAAR to help ensure regulatory measures are in place to support our businesses.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish with your role on the board?

MG: Learn more about what can be done in Canada from the team of volunteers and CAAR staff.

RR: Developing a thorough understanding of all industry challenges, not just those that are unique to Richardson.

Q: Outside of your work in agriculture, what are you passionate about?

MG: Family is number one and with the seasonal demands we work under, it's extremely important to spend time with them and be involved in their lives. We are very adventurous and enjoy active holidays and the outdoors.

RR: I have a wonderful family, my wife Breanna and our two children, Hudson, seven and Presley, four. Breanna and I enjoy taking kids to their activities and sports like dance, hockey, football and baseball.

Q: Do you have any other personal details you would like to share with your fellow members - family, fun facts, etc.?

MG: Next year I will celebrate my 25th year with McEwen's Fuels & Fertilizers. This spring marked my 27th spring fertilizer season!

RR: In August, our family relocated to East St. Paul, MB from Regina, SK.

Q: Any final thoughts you would like to share with CAAR members?

MG: I look forward to serving the membership and will work hard to contribute input and perspective where I can.

RR: I would like to thank Mitch and team for all their efforts in supporting CAAR members. ♦



Get involved!

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THE 2021 VIRTUAL CAAR CONFERENCE: EDUCATE. ENGAGE. EVOLVE.

CAAR invites all ag retailers from across Canada to join us at our annual 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference, hosted from February 9 – 11, 2021.

Our virtual event is an interactive, online experience, providing ag retailers with an opportunity to educate themselves through informative sessions and group discussions, engage with exhibitors and other attendees to build new connections and evolve to provide the best service for their customers.

For more information about the virtual CAAR Conference and to register, check out the CAAR Conference program included with this issue of the CAAR Communicator or go to caar.org/caar-conference.

Don't forget to tweet #CAARcon when sharing your experience of the 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference!

REGISTRATION DETAILS

With virtual attendee passes starting at \$125 and the potential to earn up to 8 CEU credits, the 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference is great value and a must-attend event for all ag retailers. Our conference has been designed for you and your team to educate, engage and evolve virtually from the comfort of your office or home.

VIRTUAL CAAR CONFERENCE AGENDA

The 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference three-day agenda has been developed by the conference committee who know what ag retailers need and includes relevant and engaging topics as well as virtual networking opportunities throughout the day.

The agenda includes virtual sessions each day that guide you on how to navigate the future of ag retail, learn more about the carbon tax and the challenges it brings, how to manage regulatory requirements, the impacts of global trends to ag retailers, understanding your customers' journey and learning how to reduce the spread of disinformation in the agriculture landscape.

The agenda also includes concurrent virtual sessions each day that give you the opportunity to tailor your interests, the sessions include best practices and safety in the workplace, managing COVID-19 safety requirements, investing in technology and connecting the dots, the value of benchmarking your business, and how to effectively engage and communicate with your employees and customers.

Go to caar.org/caar-conference for the full agenda and learn more about our speakers presenting at the 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference.

PRO-AG INVESTMENTS ONLINE AUCTION

The Pro-Ag Investments Auction will be hosted online from February 9 – 11. You don't need to attend the CAAR Conference to bid on auction items, just pre-register on the auction website and you're ready to start viewing and bidding on items.

We're making it easier for you to bid on auction products through online and mobile bidding, all from the comfort of your home or office. CharityAuctionsToday.com is facilitating the online auction and items will be available to preview ahead of the event. Online and mobile bidding will open on February 9, 10:00 am CST and close on February 11, 3:30 pm CST.

Go to caar.org/caar-conference/auction and check out the auction items that have been generously donated and plan your bidding, with products like seed and fertilizer to apparel and electronics, you will definitely find items to bid on! ♣

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Year in Review

The ag industry showed strength and unity in the face of challenges.

By Jody Dundas



COVID-19 drastically changed how ag retailers conducted business in 2020. As an essential service, businesses in all areas of the agriculture industry had to find innovative ways to pivot their norm in a world that changed overnight.

“2020, by far, was not a normal year but individual responses to challenges like these displays the resilience of the ag industry as a whole,” says Mitch Rezanoff, CAAR’s executive director. “Retailers and ag businesses alike had to rediscover new ways to reach out to farmers in a quickly evolving situation. How they have reacted to these changes displays the strength of the ag industry and our desire to move forward together.”

CAAR’s 25th Anniversary Milestone

2020 marked CAAR’s 25th year representing ag retailer’s interests and delivering services that are critical to the day-to-day operations of our industry. Established in 1995, the association aimed to unify and strengthening the voices of ag retailers across the country.

To this day, CAAR continues to maintain their commitment to retailers year after year – to protect and promote the interests of all Canadian ag retailers.

Fertilizing Growth

In Jan. 2020, Rezanoff represented CAAR members at the annual Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Information Day, held in conjunction with Fertilizer Canada’s Canadian Fertilizer Products Forum and the newly formed annual meeting for Fertilizer & Supplement Advisory Committee (FSAC).

The three-day meeting included updates on changes to the classification of nitrification and urease inhibitors and discussion on the most recent innovations in fertilizer, supplements and biologicals. CAAR’s presence in ag industry events like the CFIA Information Day ensures the ag retailer’s voice and interests are included in the decision making and regulation amendments affecting the industry.

In the last few years, CAAR kept a close eye on the Transportation of Dangerous Good Regulations (TDG Regulations) and quickly relayed the updates to retailer members through Member Alert newsletters and articles on caar.org.

“

I am proud of how the CAAR team managed through COVID-19 and for their resilience and nimbleness.

”

—Theresa Bolton

Transport Canada has updated the regulations in 2020, namely the CSA B620:20, CSA B622:20, TC 51 and CSA B620:20 in association to high-pressure vessels. As a result of the changes, CAAR has removed the need for the Equivalency Certificate SH 11960.

2020 CAAR Conference

CAAR was fortunate to have hosted one of the last in-person agriculture events of 2020 with the annual CAAR Conference, bringing ag retailers back to sunny Saskatoon, SK for two-and-a-half days of speaker sessions and unbeatable networking opportunities from Feb. 11-13.

The conference kicked off with roundtable discussions that gathered delegates together to share their experiences and learn from their peers. This was followed by a jam-packed agenda of speakers, one highlight of which was Craig Klemmer’s analysis of economic trends and shared insight on how national and global factors are driving the purchasing behaviours of farmers, and what it meant for the health of the overall agriculture industry.

In addition to sharing a snapshot of trends in the marketplace, Klemmer provided sound advice for retailers, highlighting areas where there are opportunities to fine-tune their strategies to remain competitive.

“Canadian agriculture is adjusting, and we need to adjust with it,” said Klemmer. “There has been quite a bit of investment and scaling-up (by retailers); we need to ask if this is the time to be making investments. Are we in the position to adjust to a softening industry?”

Little did we know how much adjusting COVID-19 would force on ag retail in the coming months.

CAAR also welcomed its first female board chair, Theresa Bolton, at the conference. Prior to her role as board chair, Bolton served retailer members through her work with CAAR’s board of directors and executive committee.

Adapting to COVID-19

On March 13th, CAAR sent its first Member Alert on the topic of COVID-19, advising retailers to take a proactive stance and take additional health and safety precautions in the workplace.

Shortly after this, in response to the rapidly changing federal government guidelines, CAAR created the Ag

Retailer Support webpage, which continues to include up-to-date COVID-19 information, resources and articles for ag retailers to assist them do their part to help reduce the spread.

A webinar was hosted for members to introduce this resource and get feedback on how the association could support them in navigating this new ground. CAAR Perk\$ partner TwoGreySuits also offered complimentary COVID-19 business protocols for business owners and employees.

CAAR was early to recognize the role of agriculture as an essential service and its potential to contribute to Canada's economic recovery. Supply and labour disruptions were areas of special concern and the association went to work advocating on behalf of members to make sure their concerns were heard.

In March, Lisa Defoort returned from maternity leave to an expanded role as Communications and Event Manager at CAAR, returning the association to its full complement of staff.

Shortly after her return, like many organizations across Canada, the staff began working remotely and started to consider and adjust to the impact COVID-19 would have on CAAR's ability to serve members. Despite

not knowing what the coming months would bring, planning got underway for the 2021 CAAR Conference in Edmonton, AB with the assumption we would all gather in person and raise a toast to a challenging year that was now behind us.

A little later in the spring we asked members to renew their membership in the association. Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, the vast majority did which speaks to the perseverance of the industry and a strong show of support for the important work the association does.

In September, after much consultation with all stakeholders in the association, it was announced that the 2021 CAAR Conference would be held virtually. The board, conference committee and staff immediately pivoted to making plans to bring the ag retail event of the year into the offices and homes of members.

In conjunction with this announcement, all in-person NTSP training was cancelled and CAAR worked to host virtual training events to provide members with the training they required.

In October the board conducted a two-day virtual meeting in place of the annual

in-person meeting. During this meeting it was resolved to better understand the challenges that CAAR members were facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial regulations. A number of other areas of focus for 2021 were also discussed, you can read more about these in our Year in Preview on pg. 12.

The CAAR Member Retailer Survey was also launched at this time to help identify the key issues facing retailer members and how the association can create services and resources better tailored to members.

The staff at CAAR ended the year working remotely again as a second wave of infections seriously curtailed the work of many across Canada. That didn't stop them from making regular announcements on what to expect at the 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference, aptly titled Educate. Engage. Evolve.

"I am proud of how the CAAR team managed through COVID-19 and for their resilience and nimbleness," says CAAR Board Chair Theresa Bolton. "From relocating everyone to work from home, to moving the conference to virtual, to focusing on the advantages rather than seeing the challenges – this team adjusted with a positive and 'can-do' attitude." ♦

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Year in Preview

CAAR Board and Staff Share Priorities for 2021

By Jody Dundas

Photo: iStock.com/SeventyFour

As the geopolitical environment evolves, the need for an association representing the voice of the agriculture industry is needed now more than ever, says Mitch Rezanoff, executive director of CAAR. Public opinion continues to drive legislation rather than sound science, economic value and contribution.

Advocating on behalf of the Canadian agriculture industry to maintain international competitiveness and lessen or eliminate burdening regulations impacting Canadian agriculture production will continue to be a priority for CAAR in 2021.

Due to marketplace changes, the CAAR board and executive council have recognized the need for the association to evolve while continuing to provide value to ag retailers.

“COVID-19 forced our membership to adapt quickly to ensure the business of ag retailing continued uninterrupted,” says Rezanoff. “CAAR immediately set forth a plan to assess the impacts of these adaptations and adjust our deliverables.”

Also influencing the priorities for this year are the results of the member interviews and survey the association conducted in the fall of 2020, which indicated improvements needed in communicating with members.

“Members not understanding the work CAAR does on their behalf is a risk that should be addressed,” says board and executive council chair Theresa Bolton. “The work being done by CAAR is critical to the ag industry, but if members don’t hear about it, they can’t appreciate it. We need to communicate this better.”

Communications committee chair Martin Kiefer says that feedback confirms the work his committee started last year in conducting a major review of the association’s communications, and issuing an RFP for publishing and digital services.

The outcomes of this review and the responses to the survey have set the stage for work to do in 2021, which includes:

- Completing the implementation of a customer relationship management (CRM) system to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communicating with members;
- Redesigning the CAAR website to deliver a better user experience, focused on the core services members need;

- Working with a new communications partner to continue building CAAR’s brand with members while extending their messaging beyond the membership base;
- Continuing to promote CAAR’s services and support the goals set in the strategic plan.

“Last year we launched a number of initiatives that will have a long-term impact on the way we communicate with our members,” says Kiefer. “This year, we expect to start seeing the fruits of that labour and we are looking forward to the feedback from our members.”

Strategic Planning

Recognizing the significant changes forced on the industry due to COVID-19, the CAAR staff and board will be developing an updated strategic plan to identify the priorities for the next three to five years. Among the topics the plan is expected to cover are:

- Continue advocating on behalf of the agriculture industry as an essential service that must be allowed to conduct business activities without disruption throughout the year;
- Work with agriculture stakeholders to minimize the impact of the Government of Canada clean fuel standard;
- Assess new carbon credit models and identify the role CAAR and ag retailers can play supporting farmer revenue streams associated with carbon sequestering;
- Identify and capitalize on solutions and investments in the most current technologies to increasing retail connectivity;
- Develop and deliver new online training to ag retailers;
- Support agriculture recycling activities and advance the role of ag retailers in sustainability.

“I think we have all come to the conclusion that the ‘normal’ we’ve all been looking forward to returning will not be the ‘normal’ we remember,” says Rezanoff. “I think with some of the ways of doing things we’ve all been forced to adapt will remain because we’ve learned they are a better way of doing things.

“We’re looking forward to building a better association in 2021, putting what we’ve learned to work providing even greater value and representation of ag retailers and Canadian agriculture.” ♦

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OPPORTUNITIES WITH AG TECHNOLOGY

Emerging ag technology has the potential to disrupt.

By Alyssa Gallano

Autonomous equipment and precision application systems have the potential to disrupt the traditional inputs application, which some say will ultimately benefit retailers.

David Parker, executive vice president of FLM Harvest and the opening presenter at the 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference, says farmers trust their retailer's expertise and would likely consult them on new ag products and trends.

"Ag retailers are often very well-known and very trusted by the producer. They could guide their customer's decision by offering good general knowledge about ag technology," says Parker. "It's a role most retailers don't give themselves enough credit for."

Ben Sees, product manager at Raven Industries Inc., says retailers often introduce a new technology's capabilities to a farmer and teach them how to utilize the equipment on their field.

"Farmers look to ag retailers for services that make their lives easier," says Sees. "Ag technology provides the value, accuracy and timely services that farmers need, and retailers can give them that."

The opportunity in this is by upgrading their knowledge retailers can position themselves as experts in ag tech in addition to ag products.

Labour and Time Savings

A farmer's most precious commodity is time, and advances in ag tech can be an answer to one of the industry's biggest challenges – labour shortages.

"There is a growing concern over labour shortages in the agricultural sector, that includes skilled labourers," says Sees. "Ag tech is trying to alleviate overall labour shortages by creating autonomous systems that will operate and perform tasks very consistently over and over again."

“

Farmers look to ag retailers for services that make their lives easier. Ag technology provides the value, accuracy and timely services that farmers need, and retailers can give them that.

”

—Ben Sees

The Raven Dot autonomous platform, seen here with the CONNECT sprayer installed, is scheduled for commercial launch in late 2021.

Photo: Pattison Liquid Systems



In late 2019, Raven acquired SmartAg, a technology company that developed aftermarket retrofit kits to automate farm equipment and a platform to connect, manage and safely operate autonomous machines. In 2020 they also finalized their acquisition of DOT, a U-shaped modular autonomous platform that has the potential to transform much of the field work performed by manned equipment into an autonomous operation.

“Raven has been producing ag technology for over 30 years,” says Sees. “The SmartAg and DOT technologies represent a combination of our technology and the technology that we have acquired through those two companies. We put significant work into the tech we acquired to make them commercially viable.”

Sees says the acquisitions of SmartAg and DOT (renamed Raven Dot) positions Raven as a global leader in autonomous technology, furthering their quest to introduce efficient ag tech to the market. The company also established a Canadian headquarters for Raven Applied Technology in November 2020 near Regina, SK. The new 21,000 sq. ft building is dedicated to assembling, manufacturing and testing Raven Dot platforms.

“We’ve been working with our Dot-ready implement partners to branch out and increase the value of Dot to other locations and markets,” says Sees. “We want Raven Dot to have additional functionalities to increase its value



David Parker

to a farmer so they can use this system more times during the year.”

One of the first partners to develop an implement for the Dot platform was Pattison Liquid Systems, who introduced the CONNECT sprayer in 2018.

Since its launch, Pattison has updated it to operate with Raven’s newest height controller software, AutoBoom XRT and included Raven’s Hawkeye 2 Nozzle Control software that offers two-and-a-half times the accuracy of the initial version.

“We envision Dot as a machine that farmers can work with,” says Tim Pattison, CONNECT project lead. “The farmer can be totally autonomous or be operating a machine, like a high clearance sprayer, and be followed by a swarm of Dot implements.”

Throughout 2020, Sees says Raven was testing and perfecting the Dot technology and will continue to do so until its commercial launch in late 2021.

Application Savings

Brent Nicol, Canada Lead for xarvio – Digital Farming Solutions, says one of precision application’s greatest benefits will be to help farmers reduce the amount of product they need, and apply it in a more efficient and sustainable manner.








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Xarvio has been developing its Smart Sprayer precision sprayer technology since 2017, and in 2020 announced a joint venture with the technology company Bosch to further its development.

The Smart Sprayer uses image-recognition technology for targeted herbicide application. As the sprayer moves through the field, the attached high-resolution cameras identify weeds amongst the stubble or crop and signals the Smart Sprayer to spray only the weed for targeted application. Nicol says that while precision sprayer technologies like the Smart Sprayer offer measurable advantages, it may take some time for farmers and retailers to become accustomed to the idea.

“These tools and technologies are already in the works,” says Nicol. “When the time comes for more demand in sustainability, the hard work has already been done on the technology. Hopefully, it will be an easy transfer to both the growers and the retailers to kind of hit the ground running with its adoption.”

Nicol says the first commercial xarvio Smart Sprayers are in scope for 2023 or 2024. He expects Smart Sprayers to end up on large and corporate farms first and eventually onto smaller farms as it becomes widely available.

As farmers adopt technology that reduces labour needs and input volumes, retailers can add value by becoming advisers in ag tech.

Updating the Retailer-Customer Relationship

The autonomous and precision ag technology markets will continue to grow, says Parker, while the number of farms will continue to shrink.

“Customer retention is a huge deal in North American agriculture, especially in crops,” says Parker. “Farm consolidation has been going on forever, but it’s now moving at an accelerated pace.

“Retailers in the same market have all the same top customers, so retailers need to think about the customer’s needs like a strategic advantage,” says Parker. “We don’t have the luxury to not think like that today because of the issue of consolidation.”

Parker says retailers should consider partnering with new technology companies. Collaborating with other companies could increase a retailer’s knowledge of ag technologies and provide a unique service to its customers. He believes keeping an eye on new trends in both ag technology and inputs are tactics that can help keep retailers competitive.

“Be proactive,” says Parker. “Speak to companies bringing the best technology and see what partnering opportunities they have. You do not have to own it all yourself to offer useful services to a customer.”

Sees says ag tech has the potential to give farmers additional flexibility by assigning repetitive farm labour to machines and improving efficiency. For retailers, the ag technology market could expand the kinds of services they offer their customers.

“I don’t know any farmer or ag retailer that has enough labour to accomplish everything they want to do in a day,” says Sees.

“Ag tech gives them more flexibility to do the things that they normally wouldn’t have time for.”

A move towards more widespread use of advanced precision ag technology could also be good news for the environment. Nicol says consumers are becoming more knowledgeable about where their food comes from, including how it is grown. Nicol anticipates that it is only a matter of time before governments will implement regulations on farming practices.

“As the general population wants to know more about how their food is grown and maintained, it increases the potential for some types of government regulation,” says Nicol. “They could start mandating targeted applications, and we’re starting to hear that.”

This could mean a reduction in the overall use and purchase of inputs as governments, consumers and producers demand more sustainable farming practices.

“There is no doubt that we’re going to continue to see regulatory pressure towards the application of inputs,” says Parker. “Someday it won’t be an option.” ❖



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4R Spotlight: How 4R Nutrient Stewardship is advancing agricultural sustainability in 2021



The fertilizer industry plays an essential role in Canada's economy, contributing over \$23 billion annually and employs 76,000 workers throughout the supply chain. Fertilizer Canada's various committees provide valuable insight and advice to the Board of Directors and its staff to help efficiently achieve the goals and vision of Canada's fertilizer industry. Member

company representatives on these committees invest their time and demonstrate their company's commitment to safe, environmentally responsible, and sustainable manufacturing, handling, and use of fertilizer products.

The Nutrients Committee, for example, provides strategic direction, guidance, and advocacy for sustainable nutrient management under 4R Nutrient Stewardship (Right Source @ Right Rate, Right Time, Right Place®), resulting in economic, environmental, and socially responsible product use and earning the industry's freedom to operate.

This month's 4R Spotlight focuses on the Nutrients Committee's successes in 2020. From achieving record acres under 4R programming to the Formal 4R Commitment, the committee is now looking at 2021 and opportunities to help elevate 4R Nutrient Stewardship to the next level. Fertilizer Canada recently interviewed Trish Meyers, PAg, Chair of the Nutrients Committee and Director of Ag Solutions at Federated Co-operatives Limited, to find out more.

Trish first began working with Fertilizer Canada as part of its 4R Metrics & Adoptions Working Group and through this experience, was introduced to 4R Nutrient Stewardship Programming and quickly began work on encouraging the adoption and expansion of the program within the Canadian fertilizer industry.

"It was a lot of fun to roll up our sleeves and all work towards a common goal of equipping agronomists with the tools and resources they needed to promote 4R Nutrient Management," says Meyers.

As Chair of Fertilizer Canada's Nutrients Committee, Trish and her colleagues are encouraged by the recent progress they have made in expanding the reach of 4R Nutrient Stewardship programming across the country, particularly in 2020.



Fertilizer Canada's 2020-2025 strategic plan places a particular importance on the 4Rs under its Stewardship Pillar. Targeted goals, such as specific 4R acreage counts, have been set by the association to ensure the development and expansion of the 4Rs in Canada, which Trish identifies as a key factor in the program's overall success in the future.

"You can't manage what you don't measure. Setting these 4R targets of achieving 30 million Fertilizer Use Survey acres and 15 million validated acres was a really important milestone for the committee."

The 4R program has seen significant growth in the last year. To compare, in 2019, Fertilizer Canada reported a total of 539,835 validated acres, but in 2020, the industry tripled that figure to 3.8 million acres.

Along with these accomplishments, the Nutrients Committee also established a Formal 4R Commitment which was passed as a resolution at the November 2020 Fertilizer Canada Board of Directors meeting. As stated in the resolution, Fertilizer Canada will be calling upon all member companies to follow our Board of Directors by signing the commitment in the coming months.

As outlined in Fertilizer Canada's Strategic Plan, its Commitment is further explained with the following description:

"We will establish a formal corporate (member) commitment process to deliver the 4R program. This is expected to enhance the achievement of 4R goals and respond specifically to our members' needs. The formal commitment by the Board of Directors will state that each company holds 4R Nutrient Stewardship as an important industry and company priority, committing to supporting and encouraging efforts that will ensure we successfully meet our 2025 validated 4R acre goal. Following this commitment, Fertilizer Canada will provide all retail and manufacturing members with a secondary commitment that details what is required of a 4R program at their company and allows them to set their own company-specific 4R goals."

The Formal 4R Commitment for manufacturing and retail member companies provides guidelines and suggestions for how companies can best support the adoption and expansion of 4R Nutrient Stewardship on Canadian cropland. By signing the Formal 4R Commitment, a company is recognizing 4R Nutrient Stewardship as an important program for our industry and is committing support to collectively achieve the 2025 4R targets.

When asked what 4R Nutrient Stewardship success looks like to her, Trish noted multiple metrics that will help drive further program achievements.

"Begin with the end in mind. Success is reaching our targets by 2025 through 4R adoption, validated 4R acre counts, and a commitment from member companies to adopt the program as their company standard. Success is also when farmers, supported by their retail agronomists, realize the economic, social, and environmental benefits of 4R and it becomes an automatic part of crop planning. And lastly, when we can package the 4R Nutrient Stewardship message for everyday consumers to understand, they will draw the link that farmers really are stewards of their land, fostering the freedom to operate on-farm."

As the fertilizer industry forges ahead in 2021, the Nutrients Committee has no lack of work to do in helping achieve the fertilizer industry's goal of further expanding adoption of 4R Nutrient Stewardship on farmlands across Canada. With the signing of the Formal 4R Commitment, Fertilizer Canada and its Nutrients Committees hope that the 4Rs will eventually become the national standard for sustainable nutrient management and position Canada as a leader in agricultural sustainability.

For more information about Fertilizer Canada and 4R Nutrient Stewardship, please visit fertilizercanada.ca

"It was a lot of fun to roll up our sleeves and all work towards a common goal of equipping agronomists with the tools and resources they needed to promote 4R Nutrient Management"



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CAAR News

The latest news, views, issues and events from your Canadian agri-retail association.

Register Online for the 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference

There is still time to register! CAAR invites all ag retailers from across Canada to join us at our annual 2021 Virtual CAAR Conference, hosted from February 9 –11, 2021.

For more information about the Virtual CAAR Conference and to register, check out page 8, read the CAAR Conference program included with this issue of the CAAR Communicator or go to caar.org/caar-conference.

CAAR Virtual AGM Update

We are updating our by-laws amongst other things to allow us to host a virtual Annual General Meeting (including voting for motions and directors). Corporations Canada has advised us that our Board could propose by-law changes that would be used for the 2021 Virtual AGM and then ratified by members at the next in-person AGM in 2022.

Go to caar.org for more information about the virtual event, how to attend, submit your nominations and vote during the Virtual AGM hosted in Spring 2021.

CAAR Nurse Tank Safety Program Update

Both online and in-person training courses are on hold. We are currently in consultations with Transport Canada confirming the items below and will update CAAR members with results.

- Status of CAAR as a recognized NH₃ safety trainer.
- Status of CAAR as a recognized NH₃ safety training organization.
- New regulations incorporated into CAAR Training.

Join the CAAR Board - Nominations Now Open

Do you want to represent your fellow retailers and contribute to the strength of the industry? Take your involvement with CAAR to the next level by joining the CAAR Board of Directors! CAAR is accepting nominations for its 2021-22 Board of Directors.

If you are interested in putting your name forward or nominating someone you feel would be a great asset to the CAAR Board, go to caar.org and submit your nomination today. CAAR Board of Director seats available: Retailer Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec/Maritimes.

We look forward to including more representation on the board and strengthening the association.

New Requirements for Nurse Tanks Transporting Anhydrous Ammonia in Canada

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) has recently made changes to CSA B620:20 and CSA B622:20. The SH 11960.2 equivalency certificate will not be renewed as members are expected to be in compliance with the new regulations. A copy of the standard(s) can be purchased online at csagroup.org/store/.

It is the responsibility of the manufacturer, test and inspection facility, or user to read and understand the sections of the standards that are applicable to their respective activities.



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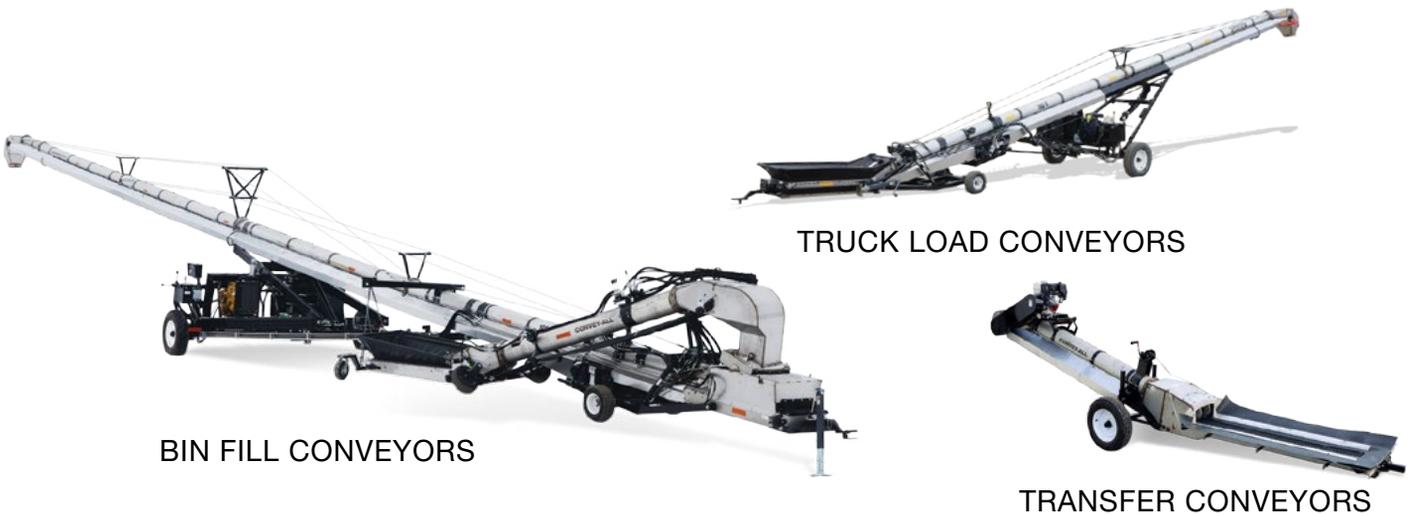
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