

Future of Agriculture in Saskatchewan

By Jennifer Klaassen

Agriculture in Saskatchewan has advanced rapidly since the first settlers arrived to work the land a century ago. This advancement does not look like it is about to slow down now or in the future. Through research and technology, the farmers of tomorrow, and consumer demand, agriculture undoubtedly has an important place in Saskatchewan's future. Where these factors might lead one can only guess.

Research and technology has changed agriculture in Saskatchewan significantly over the years. Genetically modified seed, seeding and harvesting techniques and crop protection products are just some of the ways. In the next ten to fifteen years these areas will become more finely tuned, genetically modified seed will be able to produce more yield. New sustainable seeding and harvesting techniques will be more effective, and advanced crop protection products will become more sophisticated. Technology has come a long way, but there is always room for improvement.

Agriculture will grow with the next generation of farmers expanding and bringing new ideas and methods to the table. In Saskatchewan almost all farming operations have expanded in size, and they will continue to do so in the near future. Larger farms today and in the future are working towards using geographical information systems including GPS. This will maximize the production potential of every square metre of land resulting in higher production and higher quality crops. On the other hand smaller farms will become more popular as well. Smaller producers can specialize in niche markets to fill consumer demands that larger operations cannot meet such as smaller, local markets as well as organic markets. The producers of tomorrow will also face the environmental

concerns for the future. This will result in greener more beneficial ways to farm.

Successful farmers will take advantage of advancements in technology and respond to changing consumer demands.

Consumer demand will play an increasing role in the future of agriculture in Saskatchewan. Producers will need to accommodate the trends of the consumer. The trend is to have safe, healthy food that is locally grown. There is an opportunity for small producers to specialize in producing products for sale directly to the consumer. Farmers markets and organic markets will allow this to continue and expand. Keeping things local will also be beneficial to the environment by reducing the emissions resulting from the transportation of goods. Ultimately consumer demand is going to drive the way food is produced, and producers who are not aware of the demand will be left in the dust.

These ideas will steer the direction of agriculture in Saskatchewan in the future. Advancements in technology and the on going research will continue to shape and improve the agricultural industry. The methods and technology used by the next generation of producers will increase the production and quality of the products, and consumer demand will have a major impact on agriculture in the years to come. Altogether agriculture in Saskatchewan has a bright and prosperous future.