

The Future of Agriculture in Saskatchewan

With forty-six percent of arable land in Canada, agriculture has and always will be an essential part of Saskatchewan's economy. An abundance of fresh, usable water and wide open space makes many places in the world envy Saskatchewan. My name is Jessica Hextall. I am a seventeen year old grade twelve student and I live on my family's farm south of Grenfell, Saskatchewan. My family's farm goes back to 1882, so the future has always been of key importance on our farm.

Technology is the main component of the future that everyone is looking forward to. Technologies being used in the crop fields is leading towards higher production yields. Bio-technology and plant breeding are the two significant technologies that are bringing crop production into the future. Cropping patterns are continuing to change as new seed varieties such as corn and soybeans are being integrated into everyday production. Another upcoming trend in the crop sector is identity preserved grains. I believe that in the future these types of grains will be of significant importance in the world's marketplace.

Traceability in both crop and livestock sectors will become more prevalent and mandatory in the next ten to fifteen years. This advancement of traceability allows Saskatchewan to enhanced the marketing of our products worldwide. Although grain traceability is in very early stages right now I believe it will take a leading role in crop production in the future. Livestock traceability, on the other hand, is evolving/evolved in many livestock industries. Having made progress with traceability already, the future for these livestock industries lies with tracking animal movement.

Livestock genetic improvement will be a result of feed efficiency gains from feed intake

research. The use of genetic marker information will also be a source of improved meat qualities. Expanding information systems in different livestock sectors, like the beef industry's Beef Information Xchange system will provide producers with better access to production information. The access to this information will help to drive productivity gains and greater carcass qualities. These productivity gains bring lower operating costs and higher income for producers.

Expanding research in all areas of Saskatchewan's agriculture industries will lead to increasing production efficiencies. Having the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, Crop Development Centre and new Beef Teaching Research Unit all situated in Saskatoon shows the leadership role that Saskatchewan takes in crop and livestock research. With the leading crop and animal science research in Canada the next ten to fifteen years are looking bright for Saskatchewan's agriculture industry.

I plan on being a part of agriculture, starting with post-secondary schooling in the area of Animal Science and hopefully continuing on to become a large animal veterinarian. As society grows farther away from its agriculture roots, Saskatchewan's youth will need to be a part of our growing agriculture community in order for the agriculture sector to prosper. If we continue in the direction we are and encourage and promote youth, Saskatchewan's agriculture has a very bright future.