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RESEARCH CAPACITY

Farming Smarter manages around 9,000 plots per season in southern Alberta, split between Lethbridge, Stirling, Barons, and Coaldale. We practice a 4-year rotation between plots, and we have a range of different stubbles available each year to place plots on. This allows for varying growing conditions and soil types to choose from.

We collaborate with a multitude of Colleges, Universities, Provincial and Federal Governments and private research Associations across western Canada on many research projects. Past collaborations have included University of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Lethbridge. Along with InnoTech Alberta, SARDA Ag Research, and Lakeland and Lethbridge College to name a few.

We are experienced industry trainers and have conducted product demonstrations for Syngenta, BASF, Bayer, Valent, FMC, NuFarm, SeCan, SeedNet and many others.

SITE CHARACTERISTICS:

Lethbridge AB

250 acres

Clay loam, loam, and sandy clay loam, 2.6% - 4.1% OM, 7.6 avg pH, Irrigation and Dryland available

Stirling

~20 acres

Clay Loam, 3.4% OM, 6.6 avg pH, Irrigation and Dryland available

Barons

~30 acres

Loam, 3% OM, 7.7 avg pH, Irrigation and Dryland available

Coaldale

210 acres

Clay Loam, 4% OM, 7.1-7.5 avg pH, Irrigation and Dryland available



RESEARCH CAPABILITIES

Our core staff bring the expertise and experience to the planning, execution, and reporting of all our research projects. We typically hire ~15 university/college students each summer to ensure the field work takes place on time. These students often return for consecutive years. Our equipment lineup allows us to do a wide variety of research from simple variety trials to liquid fertilizer on variable row spacing with different openers.

SEEDING

We have 2 custom-built air drills with dual cones and 4 boxes for an endless combination of seed and fertilizer configurations. One is equipped with Pillar Laser openers and calibrated Zero-max gear boxes and the other with Bourgault Openers and hydraulic variable rate metering. The Pillar Laser drill has a removable toolbar that can be fitted with our typical Pillar Laser disc-hoe openers or Stealth Pair row hoe openers. We setup all our plots using RTK guidance. We have a 4 row, adjustable spacing, Monosem Vacuum Precision Planter with granular and liquid fertility options, as well as a 4 row SRES vacuum planter with adjustable row spacing. We also own a Great Plains zero-till drill which is capable of seeding cover crops or cash crops in very low soil disturbance scenarios. We are also fully set up for Potato trial work using a 2-Row Cup Planter (BOMET) with the capability to plant separate varieties of potatoes and different fertilizer rates simultaneously. The BOMET potato planter is equipped with liquid and dry fertilizer tanks that allow us to apply fertilizer with a seed-placed liquid kit or with in-row dry fertilizer 2x2 banding. Furthermore, it comes equipped with an adjustable row spacing of 30-36" with adjustable features for seed spacing and planting depth.



PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Our newly equipped removable, 6m, single boom, CO₂ quad sprayers ensure even maintenance spraying of one full rep at a time. We have multiple 2m calibrated hand booms fitted with low drift nozzles for pesticide trials. We have a Amazone sprayer with a 16 m boom (to spray 2 replications at once) and variable rate capabilities. We have multiple spacing configurations and drop tubes for in-crop fertilizer applications as well.



FIELD WORK

We have different types of equipment to help us with various aspects of fieldwork and data collection. These include: VERIS, EM-38, Greenseeker (NDVI), hail simulator, Green house gas measurements, PRS probes, grain drying, seed cleaning, soil sampling, soil moisture probes, soil drying ovens, soil texture equipment, weather stations, and topkilling capabilities. We also have closely established relationships for drones and imagery in GIS applications.



HARVEST

We have a Wintersteiger Classic combine (straight cut and corn header) and a Wintersteiger Quantum Pro combine, a custom-built biomass/grain dryer and NIR machine for protein and oil measurements. For forage/silage trials, we have a Zurn plot swather as well as a plot silager with both a pickup header and a corn header. For potatoes, we have an IMAC 1-Row Digger that handles a wide range of potato sizes with minimal drops and damages as well as bagging capabilities for post-harvest handling. We also have a multi-piece grading line that includes a drum washer, specific gravity scale, and smart grader that allows for an automated size profiles analysis. This equipment allows us to efficiently size each potato and customize the weights and counts for a variety of size categories.



TEAM EXPERTISE

Our research team has a wide range of expertise in herbicide trials, weed management, PGRs, liquid fertilizer and novel crops. Our extension team provides education through events, demonstration tours and media in all its forms.

Name	Position	Expertise
Ken Coles	Executive Director	B.Sc., M.Sc., P.Ag, CCA
Jamie Puchinger	Assistant Manager	B.Sc., CCA
Thierry Fonville	Research Scientist	B.Sc., M.Sc., PhD
Michael Gretzinger	Agronomy Research Manager	B.Sc., CCA
Lewis Baarda	Field Tested Manager	B.Sc., M.Sc., CCA
Trevor Deering	Custom Research Manager	B.Sc., M.Sc., CCA
Carlo Van Herk	Field Operations Manager	B.Sc., CCA
Sean Kjos	Communications Coordinator	Digital Media Diploma
David Opinko	External Communications Specialist	Communication Arts Diploma

