

UNITED POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

CROP UPDATE

18 JULY, 2023



PLANTED ACREAGE REPORT RELEASED

Statistics Canada released their first estimate of potato acreage in Canada as a result of data obtained from their survey of potato growers in Canada. The 2023 potato acreage is estimated at 396,922 acres. This is a 2.5% increase over 2022, 9,819 acres more than last year. In 2022 acreage had been very flat over 2021, an increase of only 2,818 acres in contrast to a big jump in 2021 post-COVID. The majority of increases we have seen in the last two to three years have been predominantly in the major processing provinces, bringing supply back to meet demand increases in the industry that began pre-COVID. However, due to significant rises in input costs starting in early 2021, coupled with increased interest rates and land costs, as well as seed shortages, most areas in Canada saw acreage remain fairly flat compared to last year.

THE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE:

PROVINCE	ACREAGE
PEI	83,500
NEW BRUNSWICK	53,000
NOVA SCOTIA	800
NEWFOUNDLAND	425
TOTAL MARITIMES	137,725
QUEBEC	47,197
ONTARIO	37,700
MANITOBA	81,000
SASKATCHEWAN	7,300
ALBERTA	80,000
TOTAL PRAIRIES	168,300
BRITISH COLUMBIA	6,000
TOTAL CANADA	396,922

HIGHLIGHTS

The largest acreage increase in 2023 was reported in Alberta, planting an additional 6,920 acres representing a 9.5% increase over last year. Most of this increase is in the processing sector responding to continued increases in global demand for frozen fries as well as the announcement earlier this year regarding the planned expansion of the McCain Coaldale facility.

All other provinces showed increases in planted acreage for this crop year at varying levels, with the exception of Quebec who posted a 731 acre decrease compared to 2022 (based on the revised acreage figure of February 2023). Most regions reported differences in acreage figures depending on the sector, with some like Quebec down in chip but up in frozen and flat on table and seed; or Manitoba slightly up in fresh but flat in processing. Historical numbers for each province follow on page 2 to show trends in overall planted acreage.

From planted acreage we would extrapolate to potato production based on historical averages. Although the 5 year average for abandonment in Canada is at 2.9% due to high levels in 2018 and 2019, we feel that this year will be closer to 2022 levels of 1.5%. Based on current growing conditions we feel that overall yield for Canada will be close to the estimate for the 2022 crop of 322.3. Based on this yield and including the abandonment of approximately 1.5%, we would estimate the total production for Canada to be close to 1.26 million cwt in 2023, exceeding last year's crop by close to 3 million cwt.

Province	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% Change vs. 2022
Newfoundland	350	425	425	475	415	425	2.4%
Prince Edward Island	86,000	85,500	83,600	85,000	82,700	83,500	1.0%
Nova Scotia	1,600	1,440	1,200	1,200	800	800	0.0%
New Brunswick	52,000	52,900	48,450	53,000	52,200	53,000	1.5%
Quebec	41,956	43,508	45,924	46,236	47,928	47,197	-1.5%
Ontario	34,000	34,027	36,500	38,324	37,180	37,700	1.4%
Manitoba	64,100	70,000	71,500	78,000	80,500	81,000	0.6%
Sask.	6,300	6,700	7,000	7,300	7,100	7,300	2.8%
Alberta	55,645	61,235	59,677	68,450	73,080	80,000	9.5%
British Columbia	6,600	6,700	6,500	6,300	5,200	6,000	15.4%
Total Canada	348,551	362,435	360,776	384,285	387,103	396,922	2.5%

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA TABLE 32-10-0358-01

REGIONAL REPORTS

British Columbia

Growing conditions have been good since planting but it has been very dry with little to no rain in 2 months along with high temperatures. The Fraser River, which feeds the crops, is normally available until early August however with low snowpack this year there are concerns about a lack of fresh water in the river and supply may be lost in mid-July, impacting some of the fields that are only about 6" high as of early July. The first early Warba's were on sale in the market in early June and digging has begun for yellows and whites.

Alberta

The crop is in excellent condition considering how little rain that Alberta has received. At this time the crop is about 10 days to 2 weeks ahead of normal. The seed crop is also looking very good as they have received 6-8 inches of rain in the last 3 weeks, the first rains since last fall.

Saskatchewan

Growers experienced a late, and wet, start to planting but have had excellent growing weather since and the crop has now caught up. Although they have not received much precipitation in the last month, similar to neighbouring provinces, they are very well irrigated.

Manitoba

Planting was delayed 5-7 days but with the hot temperatures in May and June the crop is now ahead of normal development. Irrigation reservoirs are filled with additional capacity added. The province has generally experienced hot and dry conditions with little rain except localized thunder showers which has kept pivots running. Isolated hail and strong winds in late June affected a portion of the processing crop. The last 3 weeks have finally seen the temperatures cool.

Ontario

The Ontario crop is progressing extremely well. Planting began earlier than normal with favourable weather. However, a cold/wet spell at the end of April and into the first week of May stopped planting for 7-10 days in some areas. Conditions after this however were exceptional to

finish the planting season which wrapped up in a normal timeframe. The province was extremely dry by the 2nd week of June as they received no precipitation after May 3rd. Plants were beginning to stress from the lack of moisture over the 5-6 week period, only about 65% of the total acreage is irrigated. Since June 12th all growing regions in the province have received sufficient rainfall to really progress the crop and little irrigation has been needed. With ample moisture along with very few high temperature days and cooler nights, the growers are very optimistic about yields.

Quebec

Planting went well with almost ideal conditions. The growing season got off to a hot and dry start with timely rains, row closure was reached rapidly. Overall the crop looks very good, but the province has experienced a lot of extreme weather events in the last week and many days with high temperatures over the last 3 weeks. There have been reports of significant damage due to hail, heavy rainfalls and even tornados in certain areas. Although difficult to put a number on compromised fields, the excess water experienced by many growers will impact the yields and storability if conditions don't improve. Entering the fields has been a challenge and disease pressure is high, growers are keeping an eye out for late blight.

New Brunswick

Growers in New Brunswick experienced excellent planting conditions in May, with potatoes going into dry and loose soil with no weather-related setbacks for the most part. June was wet and cool which meant that potatoes got much needed rain. Heat and sunshine turned up in July and sporadic rains have made the potatoes grow quickly with some growers even having difficulty keeping up with spraying and cultivation. However, canopy cover is excellent at this point with rows closing and healthy tops.

PEI

In May and June PEI received an average of 5.9 inches of rain across the island and then another 2 inches at the beginning of July. In the last two weeks the island has been under fairly intense heat and humidity and the crops are growing rapidly. Early planted crops are looking very good and have filled the rows this week.

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