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Report Highlights:
Rail Logjam Proving Costly * Canada to Modernize Plant Breeders' Rights Regulations ***** Federal Approval of Genetically Engineered Salmon Eggs Challenged * Bumblebees as a Pollinator Alternative to Honeybees * New Findings in Nova Scotia Strawberry Disease

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Rail Logjam Proving Costly:
The struggle of the Canadian grain handling and transportation system to manage the record grain and oilseed crop continues to dominate the farm news. The consequences of not getting the crop out to its export markets in time are significant – contract penalties, lost sales, demurrage costs and reduced grain prices for farmers. Japan has recently turned to U.S. wheat after shipments from Canada were delayed. Storage at elevators is at capacity, resulting in producers experiencing delays in being able to deliver and facing potential cash flow problems as a result. Canadian farmers in this situation are being directed to apply for assistance under the federal Advance Payments Programs, a financial loan guarantee program that gives producers easier access to credit through repayable cash advances. The Canadian government has announced measures to address these challenges and improve the competitiveness of the supply chain. Measures include expanding the range of metrics and reporting frequency that are part of the Grain Monitoring Program. Railways order fulfillment information, weekly loads on wheels by carrier, movement of the covered hopper car fleet, and terminal unload performance will now be part of the reporting program. There will be an increased effort to monitor railway grain movement to Eastern Canada, the United States and Mexican destinations. Western Canadian grain traffic shipped to port in containers will also be tracked. The Canadian government has also announced 1.5 million dollars in funding to Pulse Canada to lead a multi-sector collaboration project of the pulse, oilseeds and grains industries to improve supply chain efficiency and reliability.

Canada to Modernize Plant Breeders' Rights Regulations:
The Canadian government introduced Bill C-18, the Agricultural Growth Act, into Parliament in mid-December 2013. The Omnibus Bill seeks to modernize certain aspects of Canada's regulatory framework by making amendments to a number of agriculture-related acts. Included in the amendments are changes to the Plant Breeder Rights Acts, the Seeds Act and the Plant Protection Act. The governments intends to align Canadian regulations with the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties (UPOV 91) convention, thereby updating Canada's legislation from the UPOV 78 framework it is currently operating under. Canada would join other wheat exporting countries, including the United States, Australia, Russia and the Ukraine who have adopted UPOV 91. This decision is not without controversy as some groups feel that the producer's right to save seed will be jeopardized. The Canadian government however feels that the changes are necessary to expedite investment and show other countries that Canada has a stable playing field for seed technology investments.

The statement from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on Bill C-18 can be found at the following URL address: http://www.agr.gc.ca/cb/index_e.php?s1=n&s2=2013&page=n131209
Bill C-18, the Agricultural Growth Act, can be found at this URL address:
http://www.parl.gc.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&billId=6373658

Federal Approval of Genetically Modified Salmon Eggs Challenged:
An application for a judicial review was filed with the federal court of Canada in late December, 2013, challenging the federal government's approval of the production of genetically modified Atlantic

salmon eggs. Environment Canada announced its approval in the Canada Gazette in November 2013. The U.S.-based company would produce the eggs in Canada and then transport them out of the country to grow to full size. The approval allows for the production and growth of the genetically modified salmon in Canada, under certain conditions. The three groups suing the Canadian government (Ecology Action Center, Living Oceans and Ecojustice) allege that the government has broken the law by not completing a full risk assessment that includes toxicity, invasiveness, and pathogenicity tests. They are asking that the documents that detail how Environment Canada arrived at its decision be made public. The outcome of this case will be important in determining how genetically modified "food" animals will be regulated in Canada. The U.S. - based company named in the suit is seeking production approvals in Canada and the United States. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) completed a preliminary assessment of the salmon in 2012 and found no significant environmental impact.

The announcement in the Canada Gazette is available at the following URL address:. http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2013/2013-11-23/html/notice-avis-eng.html#d106. The suit can be found on the Federal Court website at the following URL address: http://cas-ncr-nter03.cas-satj.gc.ca/IndexingQueries/infp_moreInfo_e.php?T-2114-13

Bumblebees as a Pollinator Alternative to Honeybees:
A recent news article informs about a new trend that may soon pick up among Canadian fruit and vegetable growers: the use of bumblebees as pollinators. According to the article, the bumblebee is a very efficient pollinator requiring just one visit to a blossom, whereas honeybees might require up to ten trips. A blueberry grower from New Brunswick testifies to increased productivity as a result of adding bumblebee colonies to his operation, given this insect's resilience in harsher climate. Honeybees remain the most cost effective option under ideal pollination conditions. However, when weather does not cooperate, bumblebees are the perfect back-up. Bumblebees are active down to at least 7° C, and they work effectively at this temperature and during drizzle, or even thunder in the air. Honeybees seem to stay in the hive until 15° C and avoid bad weather.

The blueberry grower from New Brunswick used one quad of bumblebees and 2.5 honeybee hives per acre in 2013. One quad contains about 1,000 bumblebees divided among four colonies, versus 40,000 to 60,000 honeybees per hive. Those using quads have to be aware of black bears, though. The bears are attracted by the intense-smelling nectar of bumblebees. This hazard necessitates electrified wire around quads. According to the article, this February, several growers in northern New Brunswick will be ordering 500 quads from a facility near Detroit, Michigan. It takes a minimum of 12 weeks to rear a strong enough colony for field work anticipated in mid-May. Travelling will take place in a refrigerated tractor trailer equipped to monitor temperature, humidity and vibration.

New Findings in Nova Scotia Strawberry Disease:
Strawberry growers in Nova Scotia have been affected by a devastating disease since 2012. A recent article looks onto this situation and provides details about the disease, how it appeared, how it spreads and how it can be managed. Apparently, responsible are a combination of two viruses, the strawberry mild yellow edge virus (SMYEV) and the strawberry mottle virus (SMoV), coupled with an increased occurrence of the strawberry aphid (Chaetosiphon fragaefolii), the "vector" that spreads the viruses. Strawberry varieties affected by the disease show symptoms of leaf yellowing, stunting, and leaf distortion, all leading to a drop in yields and berry size reduction. While the viruses seem to be more

difficult to combat, the article suggests that the best way to manage the disease is by managing aphids. Several chemicals are available for this purpose.

Canada produces about 20,000 metric tons (MT) of fresh strawberries annually, of which Nova Scotia's share is about 7 percent. Quebec is the largest strawberry producing province accounting for more than half of the total national level, followed by Ontario with a 25 percent share. Canadian imports of fresh strawberries have increased steadily over the past decade to reach 127,000 MT in 2012. The United States is the largest supplier with an import market share of over 90 percent.