



Association of Alberta Co-op Seed Cleaning Plants Ltd.

# SEED PLANT NEWS

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*“...we are now an independent group which is able to lobby more effectively on our members behalf.”*

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Another spring has come and gone and with it another busy season for our seed plants. Talking with the managers at the regional meetings, they felt that the workload was spread out more evenly. Early indications are that overall cleaning will be down slightly from last year. This is probably a result of ever increasing canola acres in this province.

One year ago the biggest concern for this association was the recruitment of a new general manager. I am happy to report that we have in place the right person for the job. Lorena has made the position her own and will be a big asset to this association. Thank you Lorena for all of your hard work and dedication.

The Seed Industry Partnership continues to evolve in its new format. The withdrawal of the provinces support for the general managers' position has placed an increased financial strain on the two remaining partners. The upside of this is that we are now an independent group which is able to lobby more effectively on our members behalf. Both, the Alberta Branch of the Canadian Seed Growers Association and our association will continue to represent you the shareholders and work towards building a better future for the grain producers of this province.

To that end Ron Markert, President of the growers, Larry Kitz, Project manager for ACES, and myself met with the new Deputy Minister of

Agriculture, John Knapp to introduce ourselves and our respective groups. John started his career as a District Agriculturist and has since worked his way to the top. As a DA John has a working knowledge of our seed plants and our industry. He has participated in seed plant inspections and has sat on seed plant boards as the provincial representative. John's first questions were with regards to the seed plants i.e. what is the current situation of the plants? How many are there? How many bushels are being cleaned? Are there staffing issues? What is the condition of the infrastructure? Just to name a few. I had the opportunity to express our concerns about the lack of provincial support for the plants and brought up the issue of mobile plants not living up to the same high standards that our members' do. We also expressed our concerns about the lack of provincial support for Regional Variety Testing. John has agreed to meet with me to further discuss the issues as they affect our seed plants. I feel that we now have a friend in the AG. department who understands our wants and needs.



ACES (Alberta Center of Excellence for Seed) is now a federally incorporated numbered company. This was necessary to receive the \$140,000 in ACAAF monies. This money is to be used to investigate Industry partnering, path to market and revenue generation, and Farmer and rural capitalization. This phase will be completed in September 2009. At this point if all the criteria is met we will receive \$500,000 for the next phase of the program, which will be the startup of ACES.

*continued on page 2*

## SEED PLANT MANAGER'S RECOGNIZED FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN SEED TREATMENT

Six Seed Plant Manager's will soon be enjoying a much needed break at the Milton Lake Fishing Lodge in the FAR north-east corner of Saskatchewan. Wayne Walker, Ron Wirsta, Mike Mullin, Bill Sinclair, Greg Andrews, and Ken Williams are the fortunate recipients of the trip provided by Bayer CropScience.

## OFF SEASON EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

NOW is a great time to perform regular maintenance on your seed treating system. Many plants replace hoses on a regular basis, and flush pumps and tanks to reduce build-up of dried seed treatment product. Additionally, transferring left over seed treatment product into the smallest container available reduces the exposure to air over the off season.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Continued from page 1*

Larry Kitz was named the project manager for this first phase of the project. François Hebert and I represent the seed plants on the Aces board of directors.

We have seen two of our member plants leave our association this past year. Delia informed the board in January that they no longer wished to be a member. We are sorry to see them go. Leduc has also let their membership go and their plant has been demolished and the land sold. Balzac seed plant was built on CP rail right of way and that land was sold to private interests a few years back. As of June 1 they were given 90 days notice to vacate the property. As of now they had not decided what they were going to do next, but the feeling was that they would discontinue operations. Okotoks was also meeting in June to decide whether they would continue to run or to shut down.

A number of plants in our association have succeeded in obtaining funding or grants from their local counties. I commend these plants on their initiative and encourage other plants to approach their local levels of governments for support. We would ask that we could be kept current of this process so that we can use this information to put pressure on the province to reinvest in our member seed plants as well.

## EXPORT AWARD OF DISTINCTION

### ST. PAUL MUNICIPAL SEED CLEANING ASSOCIATION LTD. 2008 – ALBERTA BUSINESS AWARDS

On February 29, 2008, the St. Paul Municipal Seed Cleaning Association Ltd. was recognized as one of four finalists for the Alberta Business Awards of Distinction. The local chamber nominated the business for the Western Economic Diversification "Export Award of Distinction". This is awarded to organizations that have demonstrated outstanding achievement in exporting products or services outside of Canada's borders. The St. Paul Municipal Seed Cleaning Association Ltd. was one of 4 recognized which included Spitz International; Meggitt Defence Systems and Elluminate Inc.

As was discussed in January at our Annual General Meeting this is to be our last series of regional meetings in this format. The board's thinking on this is that we will elect regional directors at the conclusion of the AGM. In order to do this we need to amend our bylaws regarding election of directors. We plan to bring this forward at the AGM in January 2009.

At the March board meeting a discussion was held on how we, the board, could better plan for the future of this association. To this end it was decided to hold a strategic planning session for the board to help develop a long term plan for this association. A plan that will meet the needs and challenges that we will be facing in the next 5 to 10 years. We will also be inviting all of the regional managers' representative to join us as their input is very important to this process. We will present this plan to you, the membership, at the 2009 AGM for your feedback and your approval. Any thoughts or ideas on this that you may have would be gratefully appreciated!

As always, any and all feedback is gratefully accepted and appreciated. I hope that you all will have a great summer and look forward to seeing you at the Westin in January.

*Steven Miller*

*President, Association of Alberta Co-op  
Seed Cleaning Plants*

St. Paul Municipal Seed Cleaning Association Ltd. currently exports yellow and green edible peas to U.S., Mexico, India, Philippines, United Kingdom, Columbia and China. In order to be competitive in this export market, manager Ron Wirsta, attended the 2007 CICILS/IPTIC international convention in Marseille, France, to increase company exposure and create further contacts.

With respect to diverse changes in the Agriculture sector, the St. Paul Plant saw the opportunity to increase processing and provide an extra service to their shareholder base through export. With 50 years of processing behind them, the St. Paul Municipal Seed Cleaning Association Ltd. continues to embrace growth and viability through the facilitation of present and possible future export markets.

*Sharon Brousseau*

*Secretary/Bookkeeper on behalf of Ron Wirsta,  
Manager*

## CONGRATULATIONS 2007 MANAGERS ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!

**M**y name is **Cilena Mathieu** and I am going into my third year of post-secondary education at the University of Lethbridge where I am currently pursuing my Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Education majoring in calculus, physics, and biology. When I graduate I plan to become a middle or high school science/math teacher. I love working with kids and getting them excited about science and how things work. Your scholarship is getting me one step closer to my goal. Thank-you very much Seed Cleaning Association!

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**M**y name is **Cody Mathieu** and I am going into my second year of post secondary schooling at the University of Lethbridge. I am pursuing my Bachelor of Management with my major in Accounting. Your scholarship is very helpful and is helping me reach the next stage in my life. Thank you very much.

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**M**y name is **Kyle Tamminga** and I am currently a student at the University of Alberta. I was originally placed into the Faculty of Science but have since transferred to the Faculty of Engineering where I plan to complete a Chemical Engineering degree with a specialization in Computer Process Control. I have completed two years of academic study and hope to complete my degree in three years time. I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Managers Association for the support they have provided me in my first two years of study through scholarships.

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## 2008 RECIPIENTS SOON TO BE ANNOUNCED!

**Coming Soon...** Details on a proposed additional scholarship for dependants of all permanent plant employees of member seed cleaning plants!

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## COMING EVENTS

### AGRI-TRADE

**Red Deer, AB**

November 5th – 8th, 2008

Celebrating 25 years!

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### SEED & CROP TECH WORKSHOP

**Olds College, Olds, AB**

November 12th – 13th, 2008

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### ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA COOP SEED CLEANING PLANTS AGM

**Westin, Edmonton, AB**

January 15th – 17th, 2009

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### ALBERTA BRANCH, CSGA AGM

**Westin, Edmonton, AB**

January 26th – 27th, 2009

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### FARMTECH

**Mayfield, Edmonton, AB**

January 28th – 30th, 2009

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### AG EXPO

**Lethbridge, AB**

March 4th – 6th, 2009

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### PEACE COUNTRY CLASSIC AGRI-SHOW

**Grande Prairie, AB**

March 12th – 14th, 2009

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### NORTHLANDS FARM & RANCH SHOW

**Edmonton, AB**

March 25th – 28th, 2009

## NEW PRODUCTS TO WATCH FOR

Plots, plots and more plots...

Bayer CropScience has quite a few new products that have been granted Federal Research Permits (FRP's). FRP's are granted by Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) to new products that have been submitted for registration, but not yet registered. FRP's are typically field-scale tests of new products that allow both the growers and the company to gather additional data on how the product handles and performs in field-scale situations.

IN 2008, Bayer is testing 2 new grassy weed herbicides, and a new seed treatment for wireworm control. These new products will be show-cased not only on FRP sites on growers farms, but also at "SUPERSITES", or Bayer Plots that will have canola, herbicides, fungicides and seed treatments. Please contact your local Bayer CropScience retailer for details on tour dates and times.

# SuperSite

## RAXIL MD

NEW Raxil MD has now been widely used by many commercial applicators right across Canada. Comments about the product are coming back very positive as being very easy to handle due to the light consistency of this exciting new product. In addition to being very easy to apply, Raxil MD is compatible with Jumpstart, as well as OMEX micro nutrients. Raxil MD is fully registered on Wheat, and label expansion to Barley and Oats is forthcoming.

# Raxil<sup>®</sup> MD

## CLUBROOT IN CANOLA

### CLUBROOT DISEASE

Clubroot is a very serious disease affecting canola and other cruciferous crops in the cabbage family. The pathogen, *Plasmodiophora brassicae* is an obligate parasite which causes the formation of galls on the root, thus starving the plant of water and nutrients. Visual above ground symptoms include wilting, stunted growth and premature ripening. Studies have shown that canola yield loss is roughly equivalent to half the percentage of infected stems. Plants suspected to have Clubroot infection should be removed from the soil and evaluated for gall formation.

### LEGISLATION AND MANAGEMENT

Clubroot was declared a pest within the Alberta Agricultural Pests Act in 2007. The legislation resulted in the creation of the Alberta Clubroot Management Plan, which outlines the best management practices to minimize the spread of Clubroot and outlines the responsibilities of Alberta Agriculture and Food, Alberta Agricultural Service Boards, Landowners and industries which access the rural properties.

### TESTING

A DNA based diagnostic tool called Polymerase Chain Reaction is utilized by BioVision Seed Labs to detect the Clubroot pathogen *Plasmodiophora Brassicae*. This test, otherwise known as the PCR test, was developed by the University of Alberta and identifies the presence of *P. brassicae* spores. To start the procedure, DNA is extracted from the soil using numerous purification steps. The DNA is then amplified by PCR and finally processed through gel electrophoresis. The laboratory technician finalizes the test by evaluating the gel for the presence of *P. brassicae* DNA and reports either detected or not detected.

The PCR test can be conducted successfully on soil and plant tissue (root). Soil testing confirms the presence or absence of the spores within the sample tested and can be processed at any time during the frost free period. Tissue testing is conducted during the growing season, and is used as a confirmation tool when visual symptoms are present.

### SAMPLE PREPARATION

#### Soil

- Retrieve a composite sample from the field which represents numerous locations or suspected areas. Include the entrance to the property, as studies have shown that this area tends to exhibit the highest level of contamination. Surface horizon soil (top 5 cm) should be targeted.
- Remove large pieces of organic matter (chaff).
- Air-dry from 24 hours.
- Submit a portion (0.5kg) of the composite sample.
- Seal and ship in a plastic Ziploc sample bag.

#### Root Tissue

- Collect suspected roots.
- Remove excess dirt within the field.
- Seal and ship in a plastic Ziploc sample bag.

### SERVICE PACKAGE

The anticipated turn-around time for processing the PCR test is a 3-7 days. This timeline is highly dependent on the length of time required to dry the soil or root tissue. For pricing information or further details please call BioVision Seed Labs toll free at 1-800-952-5407.





## SEED QUALITY

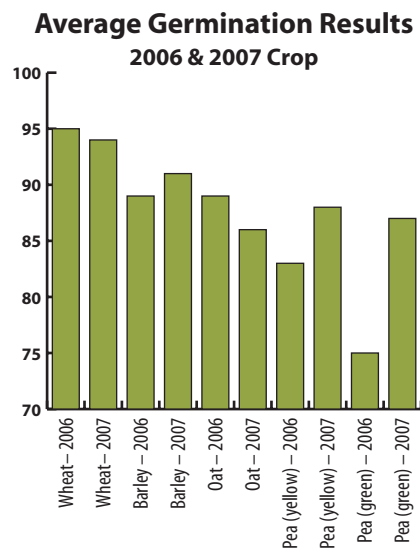
On behalf of seed growers and seed cleaning plants, accredited seed analysts conduct hundreds of laboratory tests on seed lots through the winter months. From these results, trends can be established which tell a story. Seed quality can be impacted during the growing season, at harvest and while the seed is in storage. Weather extremes, disease pressure, insect presence and mechanical damage are contributing factors to seed health.

Germination and disease testing are two measurables that are crucial to the seed industry and the successful delivery of Certified Seed.

## GERMINATION

The average germination results for cereal seed crops produced in the 2007 growing season were within a few percentage points of the 2006 growing season results, with the exception of field peas, as displayed in Figure 1. The 2007 pea seed crop exhibited a marked improvement over the 2006 crop, with the average germination for green peas rising from 75% (2006) to 87% (2007). On the other hand, a downward trend was notable in the 2007 oat crop, in which the average germination fell by 3%. This may be on account of regional unfavourable harvest conditions apparent in parts of the peace and west-central Alberta.

Figure 1.



Source: BioVision Seed Research Labs (Edmonton, AB)

## DISEASE

Plant diseases require the presence of a pathogen inoculum, a host crop and specific weather conditions for the disease to flourish. The impact a disease poses on a cereal or pulse crop can include premature ripening, yield reduction and potentially the build-up of poisonous mycotoxins. The following data was tabulated from testing conducted at BioVision Seed Labs on the 2006 and 2007 seed crops:

- *Ascochyta spp* infection in field peas rose from 0.85% (2006 seed crop) to 1.45% (2007 seed crop).
- *Ustilago nuda* (Smut) levels in barley were slightly greater in 2007 than in 2006, with a 0.15% incremental rise in the infection rate.
- *Fusarium graminearum*, classified as a pest under the Alberta Agricultural Pests Act almost 10 years ago, continues to threaten the grain, malt and feed industries. This testing season, positive test results for *Fusarium graminearum* were lower compared to the 2006 seed crop, but positive results continue to be prevalent in some municipalities.

Efforts to suppress plant diseases have been in the forefront for a number of years with many avenues of management available through the usage of seed treatments, extension of crop rotations, participation in provincial management plans and the successful execution of the Certified Seed system by seed growers and seed cleaning plants.

Holly Gelech  
Business Development Manager



## RAXIL WW

Bayer's new seed treatment product is a mix of Stress Shield, an insecticide, and Raxil MD is now being tested in FRP plots right across Western Canada. To date, plant counts from the Raxil WW treated areas are numerically higher than the non-insecticide areas. Another observation from the plot program is the presence of Wireworms in soil types that generally would not be considered as prime wireworm habitat due to high clay content. Minimum tillage practices have created soil structures that not only favor crop growth, but also wireworm survival: hence, areas that were not traditional wireworm areas could now be prime areas with damage from this devastating pest. Because wireworms do not emerge from the soil, damage is typically subtle, or mistaken for other crop production issues. *Growers in ALL areas are encouraged to check their fields for wireworm presence.*

# Raxil® WW



## WIREWORMS

Wireworms can stay in the larval stage for extended periods- up to 10 years.

Wireworms feed on the seed, un-emerged shoot, as well as young seedling.

Because wireworms do not emerge from the soil, foliar applications of insecticides are not useful in control



## COMMON SENSE MARKETING – WHAT WILL A THOUSAND BUCKS GET YOU?

In the years that I have worked in the world of marketing with a wide variety of organizations and individuals, the most common mistake I've seen is how many people confuse advertising with marketing.

Whether it's a 30 second television ad, a full colour double page spread in a magazine or an online banner on a web site, advertising is still just one tool among many in the marketing toolbox.

Organizations tend to use these tools because they have proven to be quite effective and are much easier to get off the ground than hiring and training a sales force or implementing an effective public relations campaign. And while advertising is relatively easy to execute, it may be the wrong solution and, in some cases, an ineffective use of precious resources. We all know that a crescent wrench is pretty adaptable, but sometimes a screwdriver would be more suitable. Effective marketing is all about selecting the right tool for the job.

That's why over the next few issues of Seed Plant News, I have been given the opportunity to highlight some thoughts on strategies for you to consider that might just deliver significant marketing impact without spending a lot of money.

### STRATEGY #1

The single most important customer contact point for your business is the person *who* answers the phone. Now, it doesn't really matter who picks up the phone. It does matter *how* it is done. Think how many times your experience at a business has been coloured by how you were treated by the receptionist or front-end staff?

Your staff members are the single most important point of interaction with your customers. How they dress, talk and respond to customer questions and problems all directly influence and shape how your business and its brand is perceived. And yet most organizations spend little or no time working one-on-one with their staff to provide them with the proper training on how they should be communicating with customers.

In fact, the time when this is discussed is when there is a problem and by then the damage has been done. Instead of a marketing problem, you've now got an HR problem

on your hands and probably an unhappy customer who will be sharing his experience with a few dozen of his closest friends and they'll tell their friends...

Successful large organizations understand this well. Consider WestJet, one of Canada's most successful airlines. They invest an enormous amount of effort and resources clearly communicating with staff at all levels of customer interaction about how they are expected to behave and interact with customers.

Not only do they put their people through rigorous training and programs to reinforce the WestJet way, they extended it into their advertising campaign. The "Because owners care" brand awareness campaign is as much for the benefit of the staff as it is for the customers. It sets the bar for what is expected of them in TV and on billboards and, in turn, sets a standard that other airlines are measured against.

Of course, you can't be expected to go to those lengths but here are a few ideas of what you can do:

- **Formalize your expectations and desired behaviors.** In larger organizations this could be called a *code of conduct*, but it doesn't necessarily have to be so formal. What it should do is capture the spirit and character of your business. It should highlight behaviors and activities that reflect your desired brand position. Have some fun with it, especially if that is part of your brand.
- **Share it with staff.** While this could be in the form of a written document it will only be successful if they truly understand the overall direction. So take some time to explain it and revisit it regularly.
- **Evaluate performance.** You may even want to consider including them in performance plans. While this may seem heavy handed, there is no clearer way to communicate how important this is to your staff.
- **Include your stakeholders.** Share the good news with customers, directors, investors, etc. If they know where you're headed, they'll help carry the torch to light the way for others.

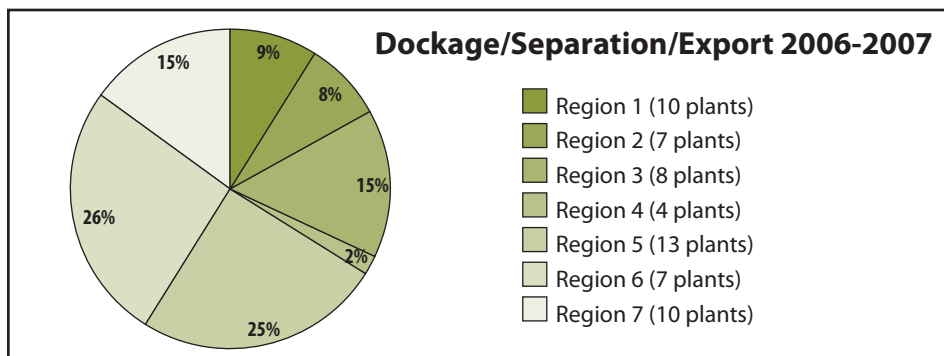
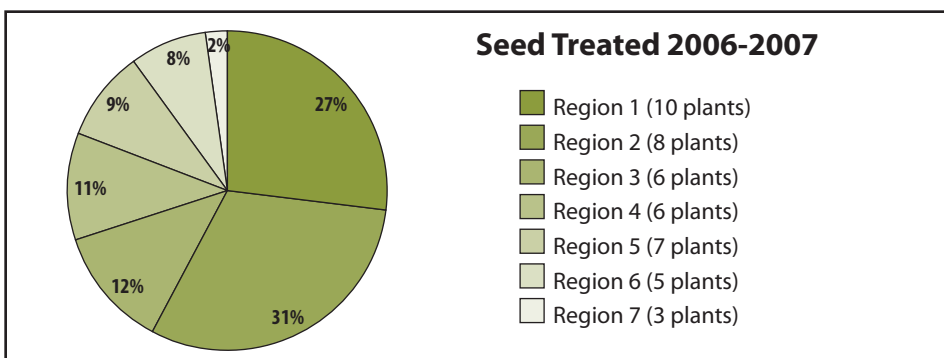
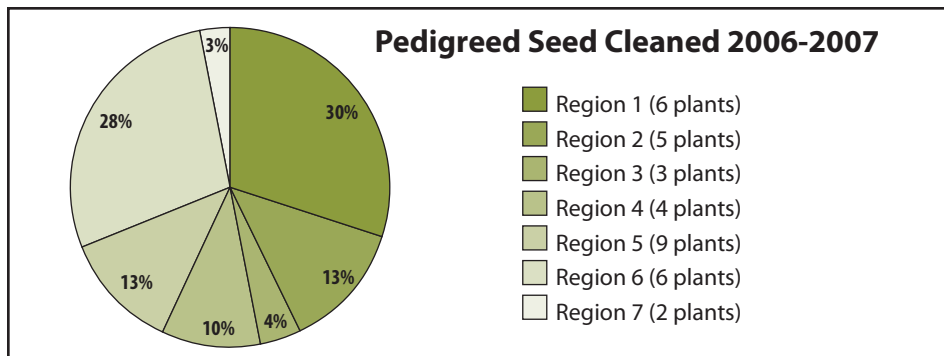
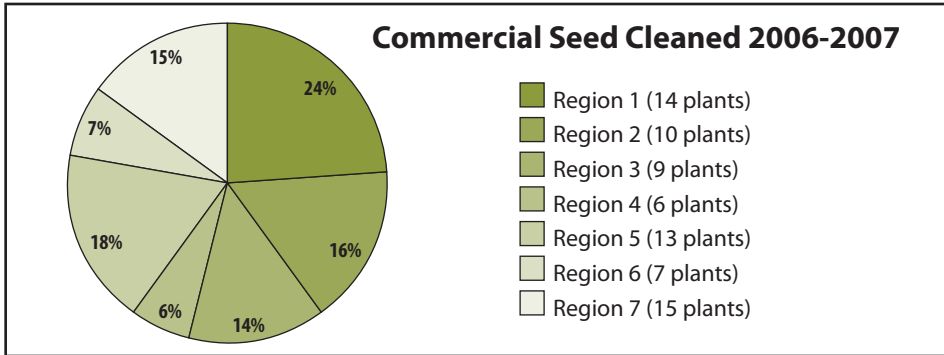
People are the most valuable marketing tool a business manager has at their disposal. I challenge you to make the most out of a resource you're already paying for.

Lee Dechaine  
AdFarm

## GRAIN CLEANED VOLUME SUMMARIES

A thorough presentation of the Grain Cleaned Volume Summaries from 2006/2007 was made at the regional meetings. The following graphs compare percent of bushels cleaned or treated by each region broken down by

commercial seed cleaned, pedigreed seed cleaned, dockage/separation/export and seed treated. We are in the process of compiling 2007/2008 data at which we hope to have the summaries mailed out to all the plants by the middle of September. A presentation, similar to that at previous regional meetings, will be done at the 2009 AGM. Future newsletters will also have similar comparison graphs for informational purposes only!



## DRESS YOUR SEED FOR THE WINTER

Fall seeded crops definitely benefit from seed treatment. Studies show that crops protected with seed treatments overwinter better due to enhanced root development.



Are you **CELEBRATING**  
**20 YEARS OF SERVICE?**

If so, or if you know of anyone please forward their names to the office or your regional director so we can recognize and make the appropriate presentation at your 2009 Annual General meeting

**PROVINCIAL BOARD MEMBER REQUIRED FOR REGION 2!**

Wayne Jackson’s term as Regional Director expired and he decided not to let his name stand for re election. We will miss you – your input and guidance was truly appreciated! There was one nomination at the Region 2 meeting but was declined and no further nominations were brought forward.

The provincial board strives to have representation from across Alberta, we need to find someone to fill this vacancy! We ask that all plant employees, local board members and shareholders in Region 2 take a serious look at who might best fill this role

and encourage this person to represent you! This is the best and most efficient way for your region to express your thoughts/ concerns/opinions, address issues and to be able to communicate/keep in touch with what is happening in all areas of Alberta and northern BC!

If you know of someone who would love to work with such an “awesome” group of board members please contact Steven Miller or Lorena Pahl. Or even if you would like more information on what this entails please contact any provincial board member.

**YOUR INPUT IS REQUIRED**

**MANULIFE HEALTH & BENEFITS PLAN – PROPOSED ADDITIONS**

As presented at the regional meetings, the provincial board continues to review the Manulife health & dental benefits plan available to plant employees.

We have received requests to inquire on the costs of adding a vision option and/or children’s orthodontic option. Your feedback is required as it is difficult to coordinate a plan without input from those who actually pay & receive these benefits! All employees enrolled in this plan need to send in their responses – this will give us a fair indication of what you the members require. Once we have your feedback, the majority will decide as to whether any of the options will be added – if the consensus is to add both or just one or none of the options presented, this will affect **all** individual employees’ plans. Please circle either **Yes** – you wish to see this added to the health & benefits plan OR **No** – you do not wish to see this added to the health & benefits plan for each option as presented below.

Please fax back to the office at 1.866.798.1826 or phone (403) 782-8022.

**Vision**

\$150/24 months	\$4.09 additional/month SINGLE, \$13.00 additional /month FAMILY	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
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OR

\$250/24 months	\$6.81 additional/month SINGLE, \$21.67 additional/month FAMILY	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
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**Orthodontics (children under the age of 19 are eligible)**

50% reimbursement to a lifetime maximum of \$2000.00/child	\$6.06 additional/month FAMILY	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
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**Association of  
Alberta Co-op Seed  
Cleaning Plants Ltd.**

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**What do you think of our exciting new look?**

Do you have an idea for a Seed Plant News story? Or is there something you would like to see featured in this publication?

Please send your ideas, submissions or feedback to Lorena Pahl at [lorena.pahl@seed.ab.ca](mailto:lorena.pahl@seed.ab.ca) or phone 403.782.8022.