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Are Poppies A Viable Crop For North America?

One pound of poppy seed purchased from an average Western Canadian grocery store sells for more than \$10.

Ieuan Evans, a Forensic Plant Pathologist in Edmonton, Alberta, believes Canadian farmers should consider the possibility of growing the seed and oil crop.

Trials going back 3 decades have shown yields in Manitoba and Alberta fields ranged from 15 to 50 bushels per acre.

Tasmania, an island state of Australia, is currently the world's largest producer of narcotic raw material (NRM) used in morphine and codeine for pain relief. These poppy crops are harvested before maturity, after they've flowered and while the round seed heads are still developing. The straw is cut, dried, and processed, yielding up to 3 percent alkaloid (opiate).

"The poppies grown now don't have opiates right away," Evans says. "They need to be changed for someone to smoke them. Plus, they must be refined into opiates for pills and drugs."

Countries such as Britain, Spain, France, Afghanistan, and Pakistan grow large

amounts of poppies just for the food value of the seeds.

The seeds are 40 to 50 percent oil and have a high nutrient value of 20 percent protein. Unlike the straw and pods, they contain almost no opiate.

In recent years, plant breeders have developed high-yielding strains of the opium poppy with very low levels of opiates.

"The point of growing them in Canada is we spend hundreds of millions of dollars importing opiates. Growing our own is safe enough that we don't need to be doing this," Evans says.

On top of opiate purchases, Canada imports around 1,200 tons of poppy seed annually.

He believes poppies, if disease-free, would be a profitable crop for Canadian farmers as an alternative to wheat, barley, and canola since the seed is perfectly suited to the climate and dryland farming practices.

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Gibbon raised \$75,000 to purchase the Alum-Line trailer and mounted skid vac system with 4-in. tubing from Handlair.

Rural Rescue Trailer Fitted With Grain Vac

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

A Gibbon, Minn., fireman's quick and creative thinking helped save the life of a farmer who'd been trapped up to his neck in corn in a grain bin for hours. As firemen and EMTs worked to put rescue tubes in place and start patient care, Assistant Chief Jason Rettig recalled seeing a grain vacuum at a neighboring farm. He made a call, and a tractor with the vacuum showed up shortly and moved a lot of corn very quickly.

That was 2019. In 2023, the Gibbon Fire and Rescue Department not only has a grain vac but also has a Rural Rescue Response Trailer that they designed. With the recent launch of R3 Rescue LLC, their goal is to provide trailers with vacs and necessary training for all interested rural fire departments.

"We've received calls from over 40 departments," says Nate Firlie, a firefighter who manages the LLC. "I think these trailers are the next innovation for rural departments. What the trailer allows us to do is be strategic."

About 30 to 40 percent of rural calls in the Gibbon area are for fire or rescue, and if a call comes in for a farm rescue, the trailer is automatically hooked up to the fire truck. In addition to the grain vac, it has other entrapment tools such as 2-ft. by 6-ft. entrapment panels to place around the victim to take the pressure of the grain off the victim. Also onboard are airbags that are inflated to lift up to 60 tons, ropes and rigging, and stabilization equipment - important for potential rollovers with big trucks and farm equipment.

Typically, fire departments put extra equipment in any compartment that's open on the truck. The trailer has specifically designed cabinet space to contain everything where firefighters can access it quickly.

Gibbon raised \$75,000 to purchase the Alum-Line trailer and mounted skid vac system with 4-in. tubing from Handlair. Support came from companies and organizations such as Beck's Hybrids, where Firlie works as the Northern Regional Business Manager. For its innovation, the

Gibbon department was honored as the 2023 Minnesota Fire Department of the Year.

Though the trailer hasn't been used for an entrapment yet, the vac came in handy at a grain bin fire where it was used to extract smoldering grain.

Firlie knows of three other fire departments that have added grain vacs to their equipment. One of them is in Iowa and provided mutual aid to another fire department this past August. Unfortunately, they were called in too late, and the victim died. The vac was used to remove grain to help extract the body, and it was someone Firlie knew.

"That reinvigorated the fire in me," he said, to raise awareness of the R3 Trailer. Firlie is the contact for fire departments interested in adding safety equipment.

Recognizing the immense cost of fire equipment, the Ag Revival Rural Rescue Foundation that Firlie started in 2023 provides funding to fire departments to defray costs. Companies such as Beck's contribute to the foundation, and fire departments can apply for financial help.

"Everything is so expensive in the fire industry. I don't want these extra (tax) burdens on farmers that it would benefit," Firlie says.

As an agronomist, firefighter, and farmer he offers one final observation.

"In wet or dry years when the grain condition at harvest is variable, history shows there are more entrapments the following year," he says. If the grain isn't in proper condition during storage, bridging and spoiled spots occur, and farmers can get in trouble trying to deal with it.

Farmers need to be aware of that, he says. And, he says, fire departments can do their part by networking, training, and adding equipment that fits rural needs.

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Old Sears Barn Gets A New Life

Nancy Rumsey says when her husband's dad Doyle heard that a 110-year-old barrel barn near his farm, in fairly decent shape, was about to be torn down, he was quite upset. The barn had historic significance because it was originally ordered from a Sears catalog and built in 1910. Nancy says he'd seen that barn for years and thought, "Why the heck can't I save it if they don't want it?" Over the next few years, that's exactly what happened.

Rumsey and his six sons launched a plan to move the barn to their father's farm. Their initial plan was to lift the complete barn onto a moving skid and haul it the 3 miles to Rumsey's farm. That idea was scuttled when they learned that reinforcing it for the move was too difficult. Instead, they hired a crane service to carefully lift the radius roof from the side walls and set it onto a supporting frame. The base walls were then jacked up and placed on large steel beams by a local house mover.

The Rumsey crew pulled the base with a Case tractor 3 miles down the township road to their father's farm site. Soon after, the roof structure made the same trek. Nancy says rebuilding and restoring the barn was quite a project. A crane lifted the roof structure back onto the supporting walls, and then the sons reinforced and re-



A huge crane lifted the roof from the supporting walls for the move.

roofed the entire structure. Over the years, the Rumsey's new (old) barn has hosted numerous sleepovers, family reunions, and even prom for the grandchildren. Nancy says it's now a cherished piece for the entire family.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rumsey Ranch, Idaho Falls, Idaho.



Neighbors of Idaho rancher Doyle Rumsey planned on tearing this barn down until Doyle and his six sons said they wanted to save it. They removed the roof and transported the two sections 3 miles to Doyle's ranch, put it back together, and re-shingled it.