



Articles regarding the Oat Stem Landmark appeared in the Ituna News in July, 2014 courtesy the Oat Stem Committee and Heidi Spilchuk....

Why an Oat Stem?

The Ituna & District Museum discussed creating a theme marker in Ituna. Board members decided that an Oats Stem would be appropriate and the plan was to erect a landmark that would pay tribute to the grain as an important and historical crop type for our prairie region and to recognize the birth place of the Prairie Oat Growers Association. In 2011, the Ituna Centennial Committee was looking for community projects that we could develop to make our community more recognizable. Four committee members, Lorne Fuller, Ted Semchyshyn, Kristine Spilchuk and Allan Ivey brought the idea of the Oat Stem forward and the committee was awarded \$6,000.00 to start our project. At this time Centennial Committee member, Diane Olech, was added to this committee. We approached the Prairie Oat Growers Association with our idea and asked permission to use the oat stem as our "claim to fame". Gloria Renkas did our first sketch of the oat stem and Allan Ivey did the written presentation for funding. POGA thought it was a great idea and awarded \$4,000.00 to the project. The Town of Ituna was extremely supportive and graciously provided the location, the land, water and electricity for a great "site". Our Town Representatives, together with Communities in Bloom were able to solicit a very generous grant from CN and Agrium which was partially used to greatly enhance the site where the "Oat Stem Landmark" is erected. Community in Bloom Chairperson, Carol Korchinski was added to the committee. Carol spearheaded the landscaping from funds received which were also shared with the Ituna Community Fruit Orchard.

What is POGA?

The Prairie Oat Growers Association continues to evolve from an organization that had its humble beginnings in Ituna and District, to a vibrant grower organization that plays a large part in directing oat research projects both from a grower's point of view and in collaboration with oat industry players. POGA is heavily involved in projects that expand current markets as well as seeking new markets for oats for human consumption, livestock feeding or industrial uses. The Prairie Oat Growers continue to fulfill its mission statement. "Our mission is to develop and support partnerships in the agricultural industry that will enhance the profitability of oats for the grower and increase its value to the customer".

Submitted by the Oat Stem Committee

Did You Know...?

It isn't every day that Ituna becomes home to a new landmark and that landmark certainly has people talking. Some of the information being shared around the water coolers and in local coffee shops is a little more fiction than fact. Here are some facts to share during the next coffee break.

- The Town of Ituna graciously provided the location, the land, the water and electricity needed to complete the Avena Gardens, home of the Oat Stem. The town did not give anything else other than support to this endeavor.

- Town Representatives, together with Communities in Bloom were able to solicit a very generous grant from CN and Agrium which was partially used to greatly enhance the site where the Oat Stem Landmark is erected. Community in Bloom Chairperson, Carol Korchinski spearheaded the landscaping from funds received which were also shared with the Ituna Community Fruit Orchard.

- The Ituna Centennial Committee awarded \$6000.00 to start the Oat Stem project. This committee was formed to plan the 2010 town centennial celebrations. After the 2010 celebrations, grant money was left over and this money was ear marked for "community improvements". Since 2010 the committee has

given money to numerous community developments including the Ituna signs at the entrances of town, golf course upgrades and most recently the Oat Stem project.

- The Prairie Oat Growers Association donated \$4000.00 to the Oat Stem

- The cost of the Oat stem is close to \$20,000.00. This cost will be paid for by the donations of POGA and the Centennial Committee as well as the generous contributions from the Foam Lake Marketing Club and private companies and citizens. The Town of Ituna did not contribute any money to this project.

- Gloria Renkas created the first sketch of the Oat Stem

- Dennis Muzyka of Goodeve, Saskatchewan was approached to commission a design, create, and build the Oat Stem and carry the project through to completion and installation on site.

- The Oat Stem weights in excess of 2,000 pounds, has 106 pods (kernels) each weighing 6 pounds and takes about ten hours of welding time per pod. The stem is 33 feet tall and 15 ½ feet wide, all done to a scale of 1-25 of the original plant. Each kernel is 5 ½ "in diameter. The stem is of different sizes and lengths of metal tubing. Each bottom stem represents the three Prairie Provinces: Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

- The Oat Stem is the only one of its kind in Canada and possibly in the world.

OATS INFORMATION

-Enough oats is grown in the prairie provinces to feed every Canadian 1 bowl of oatmeal every day for a year

-Humans can survive solely on a diet of oats with only salt added. Even people who suffer from Celiac disease can digest oat products

-In 1996 the Quaker Oats company bought their oats almost exclusively from the Ituna area.

Heidi Spilchuk

Home of the Oat Stem – The Unveiling – June 28,2014

Whenever the town Vegreville AB is mentioned, a giant Easter Egg comes to mind. Rocanville SK is the home of a giant Oil Can, there's a big Oil Tank on the highway beside Marshall SK, and Moose Jaw has a larger than life Moose. Tisdale is home to the world's largest honeybee, Indian Head has a bust of an "Indian's Head" with a full head dress and Montmartre has a miniature Eiffel Tower. Even the fictitious town of Dog River considered building a Giant Hoe. Ituna is now the home of quite possibly the World's Largest Oat Stem.

The afternoon of June 28th represented the culmination of countless hours of volunteer work lead by the Oat Stem Committee and assisted by Communities in Bloom to beautify the community of Ituna with its very own landmark.

A giant Oat Stem, 34 ½ feet tall was unveiled with a short program. The Master of Ceremonies for the afternoon was Terry Korchinski. Close to 200 people attended the afternoon festivities. Mayor Joe Garchinski spoke words of congratulations as did the Reeves of the RM of Ituna Bon Accord and Tullymet, Terry Berezny and Larry Jankoski. Rod Wlock of Crop Production Services – Melville said a few words on behalf of Agrium, one of the major contributors to the Oat Stem and Avena Gardens. Andrew Exelby, Communities in Bloom Coordinator for Saskatchewan; Willie Zuchkan member of the Prairie Oat

Growers Association as well as the Foam Lake Marketing Club; and President of POGA all spoke briefly that afternoon.

Lewis Reeve and Tyler Markusson, President of the Foam Lake Marketing Club were on hand to make a donation of \$1500.00 toward the Oat Stem Project.

After coffee, juice and oatmeal cookies were served, guest made their way to the Sacred Heart Parish Centre to continue the festivities.

Jack Shymko introduced the Master of Ceremonies, Jack Dawes. Jack Shymko and Jack Dawes have a history with the Prairie Oat Growers that stretches back to its inception in 1998.

Bruce Roskens, Director of Crop Sciences for Grain Millers traveled from Chicago IL and said Grace before the meal. Usually this is not cause for comment but in this case Mr. Roskens gave everyone in the room something to think about. He encouraged all to be mindful of those who have gone before and to those who are the future. He spoke about the importance of responsible stewardship of the land, the community and our country. Grace was concluded with a reminder of all there is to be thankful for.

Following a delicious meal, attended by close to 150 people, Jack Dawes introduced the recently announced 2014 Saskatchewan Outstanding Young Farmers, Aaron and Adrienne Ivey. The Iveys shared a few words about the pride they feel in belonging to the community of Ituna as well as the provincial agricultural community as a whole. The MC also introduced two previous Outstanding Young Farmer winners in attendance; Chad and Darlene Krikau the 2013 Saskatchewan's Outstanding Young Farmers and Rick and Sharon (Krywulak) Mueller of Barrhead AB, the Albertan Outstanding Young Farmers of 2005.

Although invited, circumstances arose preventing both the Honourable Andrew Scheer and Mr. Glen Hart from attending.

Art Enns, President of POGA, Dennis Gilbraith, Milling Oat Specialist from Richardson International and Tom Weir discussed the importance of the Prairie Oat Growers Association in the marketing of oats as a value added crop for human consumption. Dennis Muzyka also restated what he had said earlier in the afternoon about the building of the Oat Stem and the creative process involved in such a large sculpture.

The guest speaker was Dr. Brian Rossnagel, Professor Emeritus with the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Rossnagel has studied oats and barley throughout his career and has been involved in the development of 94 improved oat and barley varieties which have been cultivated on more than 50 million acres across Western Canada. Most notable are CDC Dancer oat, CDC McGwire hullless barley and CDC Dolly feed barley; all widely grown on the prairies and have raised the grain yield and improved end-use value. He discussed his life work in studying oats and creating new varieties to meet the needs of farmers and consumers alike. He reiterated what many others had said over the course of the day: that the Ituna area is perfect for the successful harvesting of good quality oats. He talked of the rise of oat production in Western Canada in the past 20 years and its ascent from a lowly feed grain to a great addition to a health conscious diet for consumers.

Kristine Spilchuk, Chairperson for the Oat Stem Committee ended the evening by thanking the many people and businesses who made the day possible and helped make Ituna's Oat Stem a reality.

Heidi Spilchuk