

# University of Regina climate change study finds answers with farmers



*ASHLEY ROBINSON, REGINA LEADER-POST*

**More from Ashley Robinson, Regina Leader-Post** ([HTTP://LEADERPOST.COM/AUTHOR/AROBINSONLEADERPOST](http://LEADERPOST.COM/AUTHOR/AROBINSONLEADERPOST))

Published on: September 17, 2016 | Last Updated: September 19, 2016 8:38 AM CST



David Sauchyn is a professor in the Geography department at U of R and a researcher at Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative (PARC). Sauchyn was one of the lead researchers on the Vulnerability and Adaption to Climate Extremes in the Americas study that was just completed this summer. *BRYAN SCHLOSSER*

*/ REGINA LEADER-POST*

A lot has changed over the years in farming. The equipment that producers use and the crops they plant are different. Even the weather has changed, and a recent study completed at the University of Regina looked into exactly what effect that is having on the agricultural industry.

David Sauchyn, a geography professor at the university and researcher with the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, was chosen to be one of the project leads for the five-year international climate change study. Sauchyn worked with researchers and students from Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Lethbridge, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Columbia.

Rural agricultural communities in countries where the researchers were from were chosen for the study. In Saskatchewan, an area around Swift Current was studied. Researchers then went out to the communities and talked to the farmers to see what was actually affecting them.

“We did systematic social surveys, it wasn’t just conversation. It was actually a questionnaire that was approved by the university and so these students spent anywhere between a couple of hours and half a day on these farms,” Sauchyn said.

These interviews revealed that winters are getting warmer, which is extending the growing season for producers.

“The frost-free season is longer, and you can talk to anybody that’s been on the land for a long time and they’ll tell you for sure that their seeding and things are germinating earlier in the year than they used to,” Sauchyn said.

There are positives to this, Sauchyn says, as it can lead to more

productivity in the fields and pastures. However there are also drawbacks. With the warmer weather, new pests and weeds are making their way north from the U.S. Also the warm weather can equal more extreme weather events happening.

With the weather heating up, it does give opportunities to producers for new crops to be grown further north.

“There’s opportunities there for increased production and also greater diversity of crops. But in order to achieve that increased productivity and increased diversity, the ag sector is going to have to deal with these pests and pathogens and also with these extreme events,” Sauchyn said.

Norm Hall, president of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan, says that this study can help producers in the province.

“It’s good to see analytical results from stuff we’ve been noticing on the farm for the last number of decades,” Hall said.

Hall and Sauchyn are both hoping that the data from this study can help to impact government policies and programs for agriculture. Hall says that producers have encountered flooding in the last few years, but there haven’t been government programs available to help.

“There has to be a mindset change in both farmers and government if we’re going to see moisture over any length of time,” Hall said.

A large amount of data has been amassed from the study, and Sauchyn says that more information will be released.

[arobinson@postmedia.com](mailto:arobinson@postmedia.com) (<mailto:arobinson@postmedia.com>)

[twitter.com/ashleymr1993](http://twitter.com/ashleymr1993) (<http://twitter.com/ashleymr1993>)

## Comments

We encourage all readers to share their views on our articles and blog posts. We are committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion, so we ask you to avoid personal attacks, and please keep your comments relevant and respectful. If you encounter a comment that is abusive, click the "X" in the upper right corner of the comment box to report spam or abuse. We are using Facebook commenting. Visit our FAQ page (<http://www.leaderpost.com/news/story.html?id=7195492>) for more information.

**1 Comment**Sort by **Top**

Add a comment...

**Jon Davies**

So basically we are being given a land upgrade. What has been produced for decades south of the border can now grow here. Great news! All of the negatives are the same as those that the us has dealt with with great success, and profit. Since we can't seem to control population growth, at least we are able to grow more food to mitigate the problem. For awhile at least...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · Sep 18, 2016 9:20am**([HTTP://WWW.POSTMEDIA.COM](http://www.postmedia.com))**

© 2016 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.

Powered by WordPress.com VIP ([https://vip.wordpress.com/?utm\\_source=vip\\_powered\\_wpcom&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=VIP%20Footer%20Credit](https://vip.wordpress.com/?utm_source=vip_powered_wpcom&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=VIP%20Footer%20Credit))