



# Wheat's Up



## Chair's Message

Kevin Auch, Chair | *Alberta Wheat Commission Board of Directors*

It is that time of year again when Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) puts the call out for nominations for Directors and Regional Representatives.



This year we are accepting nominations for two Directors and three Regional Representatives in Regions 1 and 5.

If you have sold or grown wheat and paid check-off to AWC in either the current or last two fiscal years and you are a resident in one of these two regions then you are eligible to run. The terms of office for Directors and Regional Representatives are three years.

Elected Directors provide leadership, make decisions on behalf of producers, and implement AWC's strategic direction by working with the management team. Regional Representatives take on the role of representing wheat producers in their respective regions, serving on various committees and providing valuable input to the Board of Directors.

We are looking for growers who are eager to represent their regions, but also to bring a new perspective on how we can continue to lead the wheat industry forward. I have sat on the AWC Board for the past four years and it has been a real privilege to be involved with this Board and serve my fellow farmers.

I would encourage anyone interested to submit a nomination form and be a part of improving our industry.

Producers in Regions 1 and 5 will also receive a package in the mail with more information and a nomination form.

Nomination forms can be downloaded from [albertawheat.com](http://albertawheat.com) and must be returned in writing to the AWC office by **Monday, October 31, 2016** by fax (403-717-1966), email ([bkennedy@albertawheat.com](mailto:bkennedy@albertawheat.com)) or mail (#200, 6815, 8th St, NE, Calgary, AB, T2E7H7).



Elections will take place at the Region 1 and 5 regional meetings. For a complete list of regional meeting dates and locations visit [albertawheat.com](http://albertawheat.com) or page 8 for our event listings.

Once again this year we are partnering with Alberta Barley, Alberta Pulse and Alberta Canola to bring our members a great day of learning, but also to provide an update on the work the Commission has been doing. This year topics will include soil microbiology, wheat agronomy and best practices, markets, research project profiles and sustainability. I hope you get the chance to make it out to your region's meeting and meet the Directors and Regional Representatives working hard for you.



## General Manager's Message

### A single check-off and a reduction

Tom Steve, General Manager | *Alberta Wheat Commission*

#### A single check-off and a reduction

In this issue of *Wheat's Up*, we have outlined our proposal to transition to a single wheat check-off of \$1.09 per tonne, effective August 1, 2017.

I would like to take a few minutes of your time to explain how we arrived at that decision and our plans for the future.

Since 2012, Alberta farmers have had two wheat deductions on their cash ticket - the Alberta Wheat Commission check-off of 70-cents per tonne; and the Western Canadian Deduction (WCD) of 48-cents per tonne, for a total of \$1.18 per tonne. Our proposal will result in a 9-cent per tonne reduction from the two levies, while maintaining all financial obligations of the WCD that is set to expire on August 1, 2017.

Those obligations include the development of new wheat varieties by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the universities, as well as the market support activities of the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi). Most, if not all of the wheat varieties you grow on your farm were developed either by AAFC or university plant breeders. By assuming responsibility for the producer contribution to these programs, we will ensure you continue to have access to world-class varieties in the future. Cigi provides market support and training to Canada's top wheat customers, which is essential to maintaining the Canadian brand.

Our counterpart Commissions in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are also moving to a single check-off and have made similar commitments to assume responsibility for WCD-funded programs.

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### Why a reduction?

In finalizing our recommendations, the Board and management looked at a variety of options. Based on our projections, an additional \$3 million to \$3.7 million per year will be required to meet future commitments to variety development and Cigi. At \$1.09 per tonne, AWC will collect roughly \$3 million in additional revenue annually.

With financial reserves already in place, we are confident we can make up for any shortfall while maintaining AWC's full menu of programs including our other investments in research, market development, consumer outreach, extension and policy advocacy. Had we opted for a higher check-off of \$1.18, AWC would have accumulated significant surplus funds over time.

In summary, we believe we have struck an appropriate balance that will ensure the continuity of our programs and add to the long-term profitability of your farms.

Throughout October and November, we will be administering a survey of our members to get feedback on the single check-off and reduction.

As always, we look forward to your input.

*Based on our projections, an additional \$3 million to \$3.7 million per year will be required to meet future commitments to variety development and Cigi.*

## Single Check-off = Creating Value at Lower Cost

➔ Currently .....



**\$1.18 per tonne total check-off**

**Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC)**  
\$0.70 per tonne

**Western Canadian Deduction (WCD)**  
\$0.48 per tonne

➔ As of August 1, 2017.....



**\$1.09 per tonne total check-off**

**\$1.09 per tonne**  
A single wheat check-off administered by AWC and accountable to our members.



### It's your opportunity to get involved!

**Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC)** is holding elections for two (2) Directors and three (3) Regional Representatives in Regions 1 and 5 this fall.

Information packages were mailed to Alberta wheat growers in Regions 1 and 5 in September. Visit [albertawheat.com](http://albertawheat.com) to learn more about getting involved and to download a nomination form.

**Nomination forms must be filed at the AWC office by October 31st.**

Elections will take place at the Westlock meeting November 15th and the Fairview Meeting on November 17th for Region 5 and the Medicine Hat meeting on November 22 for Region 1.

[albertawheat.com](http://albertawheat.com)



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» **AWC Program Priorities**

Investing in new varieties, agronomy and extension programs to improve farmers' bottom lines. Developing international markets as part of Team Canada, improving market access and grain transportation. Policy advocacy representing Alberta farmers' interests. Consumer outreach to create awareness. Promoting sustainable production practices.

» **Variety Development**

Core funding for wheat breeding programs at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and universities that has produced most of the varieties grown by Alberta farmers today, including CDC Go, AC Stettler, AC Foremost and AC Penhold. This funding is currently administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF).

» **Canadian International Grains Institute**

Core funding for the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi) in Winnipeg, which provides market support, training and technical services to Canada's key wheat customers.



» **AWC Program Funding**

All AWC and WCD funded programs consolidated under AWC at a cost-saving of 9-cents per tonne to Alberta wheat producers.

» **Variety Development**

AWC to maintain core funding for the development of new wheat varieties.

» **Canadian International Grains Institute**

Continued funding for the services provided by Cigi.

## We Want Your Input

Alberta farmers currently have two wheat check-offs on their cash ticket – the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) check-off of 70-cents per tonne and the Western Canadian Deduction (WCD) of 48-cents per tonne.

The AWC Board of Directors is recommending the move to a single check-off of \$1.09 per tonne effective August 1, 2017, and consolidating all current AWC programs with WCD obligations in a model directly accountable to Alberta farmers. This is a 9-cent per tonne reduction from the \$1.18 per tonne farmers are currently paying through the combined AWC and WCD check-offs.

AWC will assume all of the funding obligations of the WCD, including core funding for the development of new wheat varieties. AWC is committed to ensuring continuity in Canada's public wheat breeding programs.

AWC will continue to provide funding for the market support, education and testing services provided by the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi) in Winnipeg.

Our single check-off proposal will be discussed at upcoming AWC regional meetings in November 2016 and is subject to approval of a motion at the AWC Annual General Meeting at FarmTech® in Edmonton in January 2017. AWC will also be administering a survey of our members throughout October and November to gather feedback on the single check-off proposal.

We invite your feedback at the regional meetings or by email at [info@albertawheat.com](mailto:info@albertawheat.com).





It is that time of year again where you are shopping around your new crop samples to different buyers for grade evaluations to see who will offer you the best grade. Most buyers will evaluate your grain visually and give you a grade based on their inspection. If you made good agronomic decisions and won the weather lottery this year, your wheat will be graded number one with decent protein. If you are like many others and were handed a difficult situation with high moisture during harvest and your wheat is downgraded you will need to shop around your grade. This is where it is important to know what your grade actually is so you can best align your grade with what the buyers need.

### Know your quality

- If you have received a grade that you feel is not representative of your sample, be sure to get a second opinion.
- There are a number of different options to get your sample tested today including companies like Intertek and SGS. This is a paid service, but also a good way to get a second opinion.
- The Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) will give you a binding grade decision for a fee if you disagree with your CGC licensed grain buyer.

### Understand what your buyer wants

Sprouting damage is assessed through visual inspection and can downgrade your wheat sample. Falling number is known to correlate highly with sprouting damage and is an internationally accepted way to measure it. Wheat graded with a falling number greater than 300 is expected to have very little or no sprout damage, while wheat under 300 is expected to have sprouting damage to varying degrees. The table included displays falling numbers from Western Canada in the top three wheat grades. The CGC data explains that the average falling number in Canada Western Red Spring (CWRS) has been well over 300 since 2003.

What is a falling number and how is it measured? Falling number measures the effect of the enzymes on wheat quality in flour or meal and measures the time in seconds required for a viscometer stirrer to fall given a distance through hot, aqueous flour gel undergoing liquefaction.



### Canada Western Red Spring (CWRS) Wheat: Western Focus

Grade 1, 13.5 Protein	Falling Number, (Seconds)
2003-2012 Avg.	416
2013	435
2014	380
2015	410
Grade 2, 13.5 Protein	Falling Number, (Seconds)
2003-2012 Avg.	404
2013	435
2014	410
2015	395
Grade 3	Falling Number, (Seconds)
2003-2012 Avg.	366
2013	405
2014	395
2015	345

Source: Canadian Grain Commission

Most international buyers require a falling number of 300 or greater with some buyers requiring over 350 in certain circumstances. Since 2003, the average falling number on a Grade 3 Canada CWRS wheat has been significantly over 300. So if you are being downgraded to a No. 2, 3 or feed because of sprouting, but your falling number is good, you may have the opportunity to negotiate.

For example, a grower mentioned his typical buyer had graded his wheat as feed because of sprouting. He took his sample to another buyer who tested for falling number. The falling number on his wheat was the specification they were looking for, resulting in a better price for his wheat. Be sure to ask if your buyer will do a falling number test, or consult with the CGC to receive one, as this will determine a fair price in a year with high moisture.

### Take advantage of marketing options

More and more farmers are getting second opinions or their samples tested by third party companies and falling number is a common test done today. Choose the buyer who best fits your needs and take advantage of your marketing options. It is in your right to get the best value for your product, knowing what you have, and trying to align it the best you can with your potential buyers.

“More and more farmers are getting second opinions or their samples tested by third party companies”



## The Research Plot Project spotlight: crop management decisions in hail damaged crops

Lauren Comin, Research Manager | Alberta Wheat Commission

The 2016 crop year will be remembered for its inconvenient weather; not enough rain after seeding, too much rain at harvest time, and of course, a lot of hail. Mid-July was especially bad for hail, with fewer hail-free days reported than those with hail. While producers uneasily scan the sky, Farming Smarter in Lethbridge has been investigating what can be done to improve a crop once it has been hit.

The project, "Crop Management Decisions in Hail Damaged Crops," funded by the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) is investigating wheat's response to simulated hail damage at different growth stages, estimating potential benefits of using fungicides and nutrient blends, and identifying potential management practices that improve crop growth, harvestability and yield after hail damage.

The three-year study will look at three hail timings (tillering, jointing and flowering), three levels of hail damage (0 per cent, 33 per cent and 67 per cent) and three "rescue" treatments (control, fungicide and nutrient blend).



### Three levels of hail damage:

- >> 0 %
- >> 33 %
- >> 67 %

Response of the crop will then be analyzed to determine what effect, if any, the rescue treatments had based on the timings and level of damage. The study is being conducted in Lethbridge, Falher and Vegreville, giving producers ample opportunity to attend an extension event featuring the study. The project will make use of a

custom built hail simulator, developed in a previous study funded by the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission, which has already made its rounds at events across Alberta, including FarmTech® 2016.

Ken Coles, General Manager of Farming Smarter and the lead investigator for this project, was inspired to undertake the study after hearing the claims of products that position themselves as hail rescuers.

"One approach that we often hear about is to apply a rescue product such as fungicides and nutrient blends to help nurse the crop back to health and protect it from infection," says Coles. "This claim has logical merit but is very difficult to properly test in a real world scenario. We decided to test this theory by simulating hail damage giving us more control and using an unhaild check."

Coles and his team hope to answer questions about whether or not rescue products help, and whether timing or amount of hail makes a difference.

"After a few years of purposefully beating up our plots, the data should take away some of the mystery in dealing with an already stressful situation. It might even help put a few more bucks into the pockets after a tough blow."

*"One approach that we often hear about is to apply a rescue product such as fungicides and nutrient blends to help nurse the crop back to health and protect it from infection."*

## What to do with variable quality in world with big supply?

Jonathon Driedger, Senior Market Analyst | FarmLink Marketing Solutions

The current grind of marketing wheat is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Enormous global supplies and variable and lower quality domestically, have set up a difficult selling environment.

**Global production will set a record for the fourth consecutive year, hitting in excess of 740 million metric tonnes (MMT), with prices responding accordingly.**



The outlook was not for such a large crop earlier this year due to the combination of lower winter wheat plantings in the United States (U.S.), Russian and Ukrainian crops that went into winter dormancy in poor shape due to regional dryness, and the anticipation that Canada would sow fewer acres, along with concerns about potential Prairie dryness. However, any premium that was built into prices slowly bled away as we marched through the Northern Hemisphere growing season with yield friendly weather offsetting any declines in seeded area.

U.S. futures prices responded by trading to their lowest level in a decade, and global prices have remained depressed as importer buying interest is met with very competitive offers. There is little incentive for end users to bid the market higher when supplies are abundant and look to remain so

for the foreseeable future. Demand will increase year-over-year, but not by enough to offset the growth in supplies, meaning world stocks will build further in 2016/17.

On top of this, persistent rains through numerous areas on the Prairies have left many growers with variable and lower quality wheat and durum.

**This creates another marketing challenge, on top of the low price environment created by the large global supplies.**



Even though farmers have no control over the global price for wheat in general, nor for the market's grade and quality spreads, it does not mean that they should just throw up their hands and accept whatever discounts or premiums the first local buyer is willing to give them.

**It is always important to shop grain around extensively, but it is particularly critical when dealing with variable and lower grades.**



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First, have representative grain samples taken as soon as possible by an independent third party. Local elevators will still insist on their own sample, but having your own results in-hand allows you to show other buyers exactly what you have. In some cases, end users are willing to overlook some factors that result in downgrading based on official Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) specifications, as long as those particular attributes that they care about are still in place, such as wheat stability and strength for millers.

Second, widen the number of buyers that you stay in touch with. Quality discounts and premiums vary widely from one buyer to the next for many reasons. These can include their blending capabilities, the number and nature of their end use customers, and their position in the market, just to name a few. This variability increases when quality problems are widespread.

One buyer may be showing a higher posted price for their base grade, but have more punitive discounts that can result in a lower net price to the grower.



It is critical that you are completely clear on the pricing schedule relative to your own sample.

Cash grain brokers can be particularly valuable in years when quality is variable. They typically deal with a wide list of end users, and have a good understanding of what their particular needs are, when buyers are caught a bit short and have holes to fill, or when changing truck freight patterns might open up an opportunity to get a more favorable price in your yard.

In the end you will still only receive what the market is willing to pay for your grain. However, looking into opportunities with non-traditional buyers may allow you to grind out more for what you have, or offer a movement opportunity that would otherwise be hard to find. With low global prices it becomes even more important to not leave any money on the table.

“Even though farmers have no control over the global price for wheat in general, nor for the market’s grade and quality spreads, it does not mean that they should just throw up their hands and accept whatever discounts or premiums the first local buyer is willing to give them.”



## Policy Points National environmental farm plan

Erin Gowriluk, Government and Policy Relations Manager | Alberta Wheat Commission

Farmers and ranchers are always looking for ways to make their operations more efficient and sustainable, while ensuring the long-term profitability of their business. For many producers, that commitment includes having an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) – a voluntary, whole-farm, self-assessment tool that helps producers identify environmental risks in their operations and develop plans to reduce those risks. The success of the EFP in the farming community can be attributed to the general model that appropriately builds awareness in environmental education, practical and proven best management practices, regulation, and cost-share incentives to drive the process.



The EFP recognizes that when producers make their operations more sustainable, the impact benefits all Canadians.

To acknowledge their commitment and to facilitate investment in continuous improvement the EFP has, under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Growing Forward 2 (GF2) program, offered financial incentives to producers.

The Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) is hopeful that this will lead to a continuation of financial incentives aimed at offsetting a portion of the costs associated with continuous improvement and in turn, increase uptake of the program.

### So why the move to a national plan?

The various provincial and territorial delivery agents for EFP programming are federal and industry representatives who have recognized the opportunity to take EFP to the next level by bringing a consistent structure that can be positioned as an environmental component in responsible sourcing programs for the marketplace.

In recent years, many global companies have committed to implementing sustainable sourcing requirements for the agricultural products that they purchase.



More often than not they are sourcing these products from more than just one region in Canada and so a national program, one that offers assurances regardless of where in Canada products are sourced, makes sense. This rings true for producers as well. If we can get behind a single program that works for the producer’s entire operation and one that reflects Canadian farming practices and meets the needs of a variety of end users, then we are well positioned to help our members adapt to the changing landscape in a simple and straightforward way.

A forum has recently been established where the entire Canadian agri-food value chain can come together to discuss how we go about creating a program that meets the needs of producers who farm and ranch in a wide array of agro-climactic zones. This in turn will provide buyers with a national program that ensures consistent requirements have been met, regardless of where in Canada they source their product. On November 1st and 2nd in Ottawa, Canada’s agri-food value chain will convene for the first ever National Environmental Farm Plan Summit. The Summit is an opportunity to showcase the EFP to stakeholders and demonstrate the effectiveness that a national program will have in highlighting the agriculture industry’s commitment to producing food sustainably.



More information about the NFP Summit can be found at [www.nationalefp.ca](http://www.nationalefp.ca)



## Meet the Scientists

Irene Lam, AWC Summer Intern | *Alberta Wheat Commission*

Earlier this year the Lethbridge Research Centre (LRC) hired two new scientists at their Agriculture and Agri-Food (AAFC) research facility. Dr. Haley Catton is an entomologist who will be focusing on cereal crops and Dr. Reem Aboukhaddour is a wheat pathologist.

Dr. Catton attended the University of Manitoba for her B.Sc. in Agriculture and M.Sc. in studying urban plants. Entomology is the scientific study of insects, and Dr. Catton will be focusing on pests that damage cereal crops, as well as beneficial insects.



**“In a wheat field, there are many different insects – there are pests, but there are also the beneficials too” she revealed.**

“Beneficials provide free pest control by eating pest insects at all of their different life stages: egg, larvae, pupa and adult. When we spray insecticide to control pests, we also kill the beneficials,”

she explains. “More research is needed to study how the pests and beneficials interact with each other and with cropping practices, how much each contributes to the economics of crop production, and to determine ways to protect crops from damage in the short and long term. This knowledge will be a useful tool for producers to make the most economical and sustainable pest management decisions.”

Dr. Catton has several goals set for her research program. She wants to determine economic thresholds for when to spray or not to spray for different crop pests, as there is a line where the cost of the treatment equals the benefit from prevented yield loss, and producers should not spray unless the benefits exceed costs.

Her second goal is to study the beneficial insects and their interaction with pests, which involves using a cutting-edge concept called dynamic thresholds, which considers the combined economics of the chemical control, pest impact

and value of beneficial insects. Catton also wants to work with wheat breeders to develop pest resistant lines and is currently working with agronomists, breeders, pathologists, and many others to create an integrative system.

Dr. Aboukhaddour, LRC’s new wheat pathologist obtained her B.Sc. in Agriculture Science at the Damascus University in Syria. She then moved on to Wageningen University in the Netherlands for her M.Sc., and eventually came to Canada to complete her PhD at the University of Manitoba.

Wheat pathology is the study of wheat disease and its damage to the crop.

“Diseases of wheat are costing us millions of dollars in Canada every single year and unless we understand how pathogens infect wheat and what is really contributing to their virulence, we cannot effectively control these diseases,” she says.

Dr. Aboukhaddour’s goals for the next few years at LRC are to focus on stripe rust and leaf spots.

“Both are important diseases in Canada,” she says. “Although a lot of research is being done on these diseases, there is still a lot more unknowns to discover. I am especially interested in finding out how rust pathogens change in virulence in a relatively short time.”

Alberta Wheat Commission looks forward to working with both researchers in the future.



Dr. Catton - @haleycatton

Dr. Aboukhaddour - @RustWheat

## Alberta farm and ranch safety extension grant working group: New safety extension program coordinator

Amanda Ryan, Communications Manager | *Alberta Wheat Commission*

The Alberta Farm and Ranch Safety Extension Grant Working Group recently welcomed Donna Trottier who will be taking on the role of Safety Extension Program Coordinator. Donna will be responsible for the development and delivery of safety education and awareness for farmers and ranchers across Alberta. This two-year contract position is being funded by the provincial and federal governments as part of Growing Forward 2 (GF2).

The Working Group, made up of Alberta’s crop and livestock commissions was set up to oversee and direct the allocation of the GF2 grant dollars, as well as ensure a program is in place to provide farmers and ranchers with safety education and tools.

The plan for this funding is to create a model of farm safety education that can become the foundation of a long-term permanent structure with effective and stable programming. Donna will be responsible for developing farm and ranch safety programs and materials, removing gaps in training resources,

delivering educational resources for farmers and ranchers – whether building and capitalizing on existing resources or developing new programs to help build a culture of farm safety.

Donna is the perfect fit for this role because of her extensive background in agriculture, experience leading extension programs and her involvement in developing agriculture safety programs for the Canadian Agriculture Safety Association. She is a Professional Agrologist with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan and has over 25 years of experience working in various capacities in the agriculture industry.



The Safety Extension Program Coordinator position will run on a two-year term and is fully funded by the GF2 grant, which is being administered by the Alberta Wheat Commission. Donna can be reached at [dtrottier@albertawheat.com](mailto:dtrottier@albertawheat.com) for more information.



### Contact Us

The Alberta Wheat Commission newsletter is published four times per year.

Have you checked out AWC's new website? Visit [albertawheat.com](http://albertawheat.com) and let us know what you think!

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## Upcoming Events

	Event	Time/Venue
November 9-12, 2016	Agri-Trade	Red Deer, Alberta
November 10, 2016	AB Crops Breakfast	Red Deer, Alberta
November 15, 2016	Region 5 Regional Meeting	Westlock, Alberta
November 15, 2016	Region 2 Regional Meeting	Strathmore, Alberta
November 16, 2016	Region 4 Regional Meeting	Vegreville, Alberta
November 17, 2016	Region 5 Regional Meeting	Fairview, Alberta
November 22, 2016	Region 1 Regional Meeting	Medicine Hat, Alberta
November 29, 2016	Region 3 Regional Meeting	Lacombe, Alberta
December 14-15, 2016	Hedging Edge	Nisku, Alberta

➔ Visit [albertawheat.com](http://albertawheat.com) for more information on upcoming events, and to learn about the great work our team is doing.

### Cleaning House

AWC recently cleaned up our mailing list to cut back on members receiving duplicate copies of Wheat's up. Please contact us at [info@albertawheat.com](mailto:info@albertawheat.com) or 403-219-7912 if you are still receiving multiple copies, or if you or someone you know did not receive a copy.

