



ARTICLE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fight Wheat Midge in Your Fields

Midge tolerant wheat offers built-in protection and high yields.

JANUARY 14, 2013 – Stuart Elder is able to enjoy his July summer nights now that he doesn't have to be out scouting for wheat midge. "Since I started using midge tolerant varieties, I don't have to worry about checking my crops for midge," he says.

Elder farms about 3,200 acres of spring wheat, winter wheat, flax, canola and peas near Simpson, Saskatchewan. In 2012, he seeded all of his wheat acres to either AC® Shaw VB or AC® Unity VB, and plans to continue growing midge tolerant varieties in the future.

"I've had midge damage in the past, and commonly used insecticides to help prevent it," says Elder. "So I was always following the midge tolerant wheat research down the pipeline, and began growing them when they became commercially available."

"I think the biggest benefit is to preserve yield," he says. "Plus I don't have midge damage in my harvested grain and the added worry and expense of insecticide application."

Adam Ellis is also pleased with the quality and performance of midge tolerant wheat. "Over the last few years before we started using the technology we did have quite a bit of midge damage, and had to spray," says Ellis.

Ellis's family farms about 5,000 acres of peas, canola, wheat, durum, barley and sometimes lentils, just south of Allan, Saskatchewan. In 2012 they planted about 2,000 acres of AC® Goodeve VB and 500 acres of AC® Utmost VB, leaving only one wheat field with a non-midge tolerant variety. "That field didn't perform as well as the midge tolerant varieties," says Ellis. "Bushels were down and it did have some bug damage."

Ellis was happy with the yield and quality of the midge tolerant wheat varieties. "Pretty much everything came off in that 45 to 50 bushel per acre range, and most graded No. 1," he says. "We like these varieties because we don't have to worry about spraying, it saves crop damage from the high clearance sprayer, plus they have high yields and early maturity."

While this new technology is very effective, it does require proper stewardship in order to keep it viable for future generations. Farmers are required to sign a Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Agreement, which limits the use of farm-saved seed to one generation past Certified seed. This step keeps the interspersed refuge at the desired level of 10% of the plant population, preventing a build-up of resistant midge.

“I understand the science behind why the stewardship program is in place,” says Elder. “That’s why I grow Certified seed and then use it just the following year. I think that’s a good way of doing it.”

Ellis agrees that maintaining the interspersed refuge system is important to extending the life of the midge tolerance. “The technology works for us, and it makes sense to keep seed only one year after Certified,” he says.

Visit www.midgetolerantwheat.ca to learn more about the varieties and how the interspersed refuge system works.

This article has been brought to you by the Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Team, a broad industry coalition representing plant breeders, government, seed growers, seed distributors and producer groups.

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