



ARTICLE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hate Wheat Midge? Hate Spraying?

Prairie wheat growers have found an answer with midge tolerant wheat.

NOVEMBER 25, 2010 – For Randy Cay, a farmer and seed grower southeast of Kinistino, Saskatchewan, the decision to plant midge tolerant wheat offers piece of mind and agronomic benefits. Cay runs a third-generation 5,500 acre farm, primarily growing wheat, barley, canola and peas. After many years of dealing with high midge pressure, this spring he planted the midge tolerant wheat variety AC® Goodeve VB on over 800 acres – nearly all of his wheat crop.

“We’ve been in a bad midge area over the years, so not having to worry about the challenges of determining proper thresholds and insecticide application timing this year was a definite advantage,” says Cay, noting that from 2007 to 2009 he had to spray almost every wheat acre to control this damaging pest. In one field that wasn’t sprayed a few years ago, Cay recalls losing one grade and about 10 bushels per acre to midge damage, even though the stand looked similar.

“This year we were very satisfied with the yield and quality – all grading No. 2,” says Cay. “Plus, these new varieties offer great agronomic traits, and would be good varieties of wheat to grow even if they didn’t have the midge tolerance built in.”

Dave Cook, another Kinistino area farmer, is also greeting midge tolerant technology with enthusiasm. “After spending about \$50,000 on midge spray last year, we decided to grow midge tolerant wheat wall to wall this year,” says Cook, who planted over 3,000 acres of AC® Goodeve VB. “We’re really pleased with the quality and yield of this variety. All our earlier seeded fields graded No. 1 with an average 14.2% protein.” He also likes the agronomic benefits, particularly the shorter height and standability which makes straight combining a lot easier.

“The best benefit for me is that I didn’t spray for midge – I didn’t even look this year,” he says. While many of Cook’s neighbours were out spraying, he didn’t really pay much attention to it. “I had confidence in the midge tolerant technology to do the job and it did.”

While this new technology is very effective, it does require proper stewardship in order to keep it viable for future generations. “Maintaining the interspersed refuge system is an important part of preserving this technology. The stewardship agreement is a simple, effective way to do that,” says Cay.

Farmers planting midge tolerant wheat 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 limitation is critical to ensure that the refuge remains at the desired level of 10% of the plant population, as the refuge in farm-saved seed may change substantially over multiple generations.

“If this is going to preserve the midge tolerant technology, then it’s definitely worth it,” says Cook.

Visit www.midgetolerantwheat.ca to learn more about these new 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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For more information, please visit www.midgetolerantwheat.ca or contact the following Co-Chairs of the Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Team:

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