



MIDGE TOLERANT WHEAT STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT



– FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need to sign a Stewardship Agreement? Why is this necessary?

All farmers purchasing midge tolerant wheat are required to sign a Stewardship Agreement with their retailer. The Stewardship Agreement is necessary to make sure that all farmers understand the need to maintain an interspersed refuge system. This refuge system is necessary to preserve midge tolerance so farmers can continue to benefit from this technology for 90 years or longer.

What is the main condition of the Stewardship Agreement?

By signing the Stewardship Agreement you agree not to use farm-saved seed from any midge tolerant wheat varieties for more than one generation past Certified seed.

Why is it necessary to limit the use of farm-saved seed to one generation past Certified seed?

This condition is critical because wheat midge may attack the refuge variety and the level of the refuge in farm-saved seed may change substantially over multiple generations. For example, under an extremely heavy midge infestation, the susceptible refuge variety could sustain up to 50 percent yield loss. To keep the refuge at the desired level of 10 percent of the plant population, it is necessary to limit the use of farm-saved seed to one generation past Certified seed.

Why can't I just test my own seed?

There are many reasons why testing is not currently an option:

- 1) The test that is being used is a new technology – it is currently only available at one lab and their capacity is limited. They would not be able to cover all the seed lots plus test farm-saved seed. By focusing on Certified seed we have a known starting point for the refuge as every Certified seed lot will need to be tested before a crop certificate will be issued.
- 2) The test is expensive – \$100 per sample at a minimum (with higher testing costs associated with higher generation seed).



- 3) If a seed lot does not meet the minimum refuge requirements it would have to be remediated by adding back additional refuge. Seed growers will need to have a compliant test to get their crop certificate ensuring that they have the correct percentage of refuge. In other words, if they have a lot that is low in refuge they would have to add refuge and re-submit a sample for testing.
- 4) There is a system in place with the Canadian Seed Growers Association (CSGA) to monitor compliance within the network of western seed growers – this system will help ensure that the refuge is protected. Without a system in place to monitor compliance there is no way to know if everyone is doing their part to protect the midge tolerance. This tool is too valuable to wheat producers to take the chance on losing it.

Do I need to sign a Stewardship Agreement for each midge tolerant wheat variety I purchase from my retailer?

No, farmers must sign only one Stewardship Agreement if they purchase any of the midge tolerant wheat varieties from their retailer. However, if a farmer also purchases seed from a different retailer, they must sign another Stewardship Agreement with that retailer.

Does it matter how much seed I purchase?

No, the volume of seed that you purchase does not matter and is not recorded on the Stewardship Agreement. However, your retailer will report the final volume of seed you purchase each year on the online database which will be used for monitoring and enforcing compliance.

What happens with the form once it is signed?

Upon signing, your midge tolerant wheat retailer will submit the form to the third-party Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Resource Centre who will add the information to a password-protected online database. Your retailer will now be able to access your sales record online and report the final tonnages sold for each variety. The database information will be kept strictly confidential and is only accessible to midge tolerant wheat retailers and distributors. The information will be used only for the purpose of monitoring compliance of the Stewardship Agreement.



What happens if I refuse to sign the Agreement?

If you refuse to sign the Stewardship Agreement you will not be able to purchase and enjoy the benefits of midge tolerant wheat. It is critical that all farmers maintain the interspersed refuge system in midge tolerant wheat. Your seed supplier will likely suggest you purchase another variety of wheat that isn't midge tolerant, and hence not subject to the Stewardship Agreement.

How long does this Stewardship Agreement last?

The Stewardship Agreement will remain in effect as long as you are growing or in possession of seed of any of the midge tolerant wheat varieties. If you purchase midge tolerant wheat varieties again the following year, a new agreement will need to be signed.

How will the distributors know if I don't follow the rules?

The database administered by the Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Resource Centre is solely designed to monitor compliance with the Stewardship Agreement. Factors such as seed volume reconciliation from year to year between seed retailers, seed growers and official distributors, as well as routine audits of farmers will be used to monitor compliance.

What happens if my audit shows I am not in compliance with the Agreement?

By signing the agreement, you will agree to pay the distributor of that variety \$100 for each acre sown with farm-saved seed beyond one generation past Certified seed. You are also responsible for any audit costs or other legal expenses. If you transfer farm-saved seed for planting purposes you will also be liable for any damages to the distributor.