

## Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Announces Changes to Winterkill Insurance

By **Christie Wolf AAg, CCA**

In February 2010, Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) announced changes to winterkill insurance for fall rye and winter wheat.

Previously, there were regional restrictions within the province with regard to the stubble requirements for winter wheat winterkill insurance. SCIC has now eliminated the stubble requirements and allows winter wheat to be insured throughout the entire province with no restrictions on a region's stubble type. It is acknowledged that seeding on less than adequate stubble is a higher risk practice and, for this reason, a higher premium will be charged.

The new winter wheat winterkill program has a high risk premium for inadequate stubble, and a low risk premium for adequate stubble. The premium will be determined based on risk assessment questions that will be asked in the fall, after the crop is seeded. Based on the answers to these questions, the stubble is assessed as high or low risk, and the premium will be charged accordingly.

SCIC believes these changes will eliminate the confusion and frustrations associated with having a boundary where certain seeding practices are allowable on one side but not on the other. It is hoped that the lower premium associated with the low risk seeding practices will encourage producers to continue to use

best management practices and seed on adequate stubble. SCIC recognizes the challenges that excessive spring moisture has caused on seeding plans across the province. The changes to the winter wheat winterkill program will provide producers with an alternate option.

The second change to the winterkill insurance program applies to fall rye and winter wheat. All winterkill claims, beginning in the spring of 2011, will have an eight per cent deductible applied to each legal land description with a claim.

Producers have until August 25 to select winterkill insurance. The deadline to seed winter cereals and be eligible for winterkill coverage is September 15.

	Low risk premium	High risk premium	Dollar coverage
Winter wheat	\$0.67/acre	\$1.33/acre	\$25/acre
Fall Rye	\$0.58/acre	N/A	\$20/acre

## Winter Wheat Grower Incentive Program

By **Autumn Holmes-Saltzman**

Ducks Unlimited Canada has teamed up with Bayer CropScience to increase winter wheat acreage across the Canadian Prairies. As part of the Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action program, a Grower Incentive Program has been announced that is packed with opportunities for growers planning to seed winter wheat this fall.

Under this Grower Incentive Program, producers can receive:

- \$4/ac\* for seeding winter wheat
- \$2/ac\* for seed treating with Raxil MD
- \$2/ac\* for spraying with Infinity broadleaf herbicide
- \$2/ac\* for spraying with Folicur fungicide
- \$1/ac\* for seeding winter wheat into InVigor Canola stubble

Growers can enroll in all or part of this program. To sign up or for more information, producers and retailers are encouraged to call 1-800-665-DUCK (3825) or contact their local Ducks Unlimited Agrologist.

\*Payment is up to a maximum of 320 acres over and above a producer's three year average of seeded winter wheat. New growers welcome!

### Undeliverable Address:

**Ducks Unlimited Canada**  
**1030 Winnipeg St.**  
**Regina, SK S4R 8P8**



Thank you to Bayer CropScience for their partnership and support of an initiative with Ducks Unlimited Canada called Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action.



# Winter Wheat ADVISOR

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### WINTER WHEAT ADVISOR

is provided by Ducks Unlimited Canada free of charge to winter wheat producers. The Advisor is published three times per year.

For more information or to change your address, please call:  
**Larry Durand** at (306) 682-1626.

## AAFC Growing Forward Partners with DUC to Expand Winter Wheat Research

Lethbridge, Alberta – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) announced July 13 that it is providing just over \$1.25 million through the Developing Innovative Agri-Products (DIAP) program to Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), three winter wheat Prairie producer commissions and its funding partners to increase winter wheat acres across Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. This funding is part of the federal government's Growing Forward initiative.

"Improved varieties and good management by producers have made winter wheat one of the most profitable crops over the past few years," says Paul Thoroughgood, Regional Agrologist for DUC. "This funding will allow us to focus on providing farmers with the tools they need to plan and manage their winter wheat crops to maximize productivity and profitability. DUC would like to thank AAFC for its continuing commitment to winter wheat."

There will be a set of nine studies where AAFC scientists will evaluate a number of integrated crop management strategies ranging from nutrient management, weed, disease and insect issues, and stubble, crop residue and crop rotation management, which will all lead to improved winter wheat plant health.

"Time management is an issue because when winter wheat needs to be seeded, farmers are often busy with their spring crop harvest," explains Brian Beres, Biologist and Principal Investigator, Integrated Crop Management Systems, Lethbridge Research Station. "Our research is going to focus on developing better production methods that will ultimately result in improved winter survival, crop yield, and yield and grade stability across the Prairies."

DUC has been working to conserve, restore and manage wetlands and their associated habitats for North America's waterfowl since 1938. Winter wheat provides ideal undisturbed nesting sites for waterfowl providing a longer, more productive nesting period.

"Ducks that choose to nest in winter wheat are 24 times more likely to successfully hatch as those that nest in spring-seeded cereals," says Thoroughgood. "This is particularly beneficial to northern pintails, a species that has declined since the late '70s."

This research project builds on a long-standing relationship between DUC and winter wheat producer commissions across the Prairies. Winter wheat producer groups in each of the Prairie Provinces such as the Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission, Saskatchewan Winter Cereals Development Commission and Winter Cereals Manitoba Inc. give farmers an excellent opportunity to direct and participate in the research.

"Today's announcement is the result of the co-operation between producer groups and DUC working together towards the common goal of increasing the cultivation and profitability of winter wheat," says Jake Davidson, Executive Director, Saskatchewan Winter Cereals Development Commission and Winter Cereals Manitoba, Inc. "Currently winter wheat is one of the smaller cereal crops grown on the Prairies. It is essential that all the parties with a vested interest in winter wheat work closely together to maximize the investment of producer dollars in this research."

DUC's investment in this important research is made possible through its partnership with Bayer CropScience, under the North American initiative of Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action. This program showcases the important role winter wheat plays in sustainable agriculture and highlights an agricultural practice that is profitable and wildlife-friendly.



MP Rick Casson announces funding for winter wheat research.

# U.S. Seed Treatment Research Shows Possible Yield and Winter Survival Benefits

By Steve Dvorak – DUI Agronomist

During the harvest years of 2007, 2008, and 2009, Ducks Unlimited Inc. (DUI) in the U.S., has been working with Kent McKay (Vision Research Park) in evaluating winter wheat response to various U.S. Bayer CropScience fungicide and insecticide seed treatment combinations at five different north central North Dakota locations. 'Jerry' was the hard red winter wheat (HRWW) variety used. All locations were direct-seeded into spring wheat stubble. Products evaluated

included Raxil™ brand products and new Proceed™ formulations.

## Observations

The Raxil MD formulation averaged a 1.7 bu/A (~3%) increase while the Proceed formulation averaged a 4.4 bu/A (~7.5%) increase versus the untreated (Fig. 1) when averaged over the five locations and three years.

Adding an insecticide with the fungicide seed treatment (Raxil MD-W vs. Raxil MD; Proceed Plus™ vs. Proceed) provided an additional increase of approximately 2.5 bu/A for

both formulations (Fig. 2). The total yield increase for Raxil MD-W was 4.9 bu/A (8.9%) and 6.7 bu/A (12.2%) for Proceed Plus as compared to the untreated.

Statistically significant yield responses were rarely observed for any seed treatment at any location. However, there was a consistent trend for increased yields suggesting that it would be reasonable to expect similar responses in production fields. The 2009 trial at Tagus indicated seed treatment appeared to have a positive correlation with winter survival (Fig. 3).

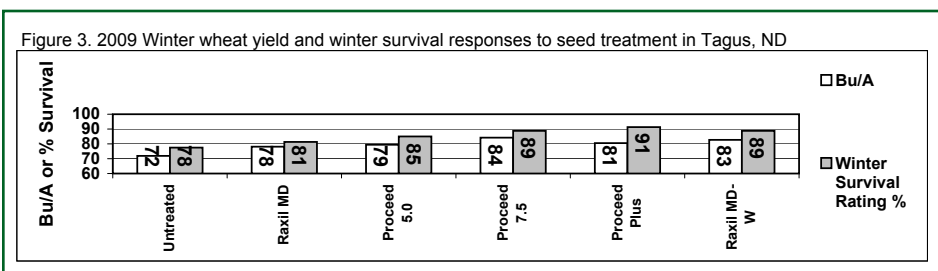
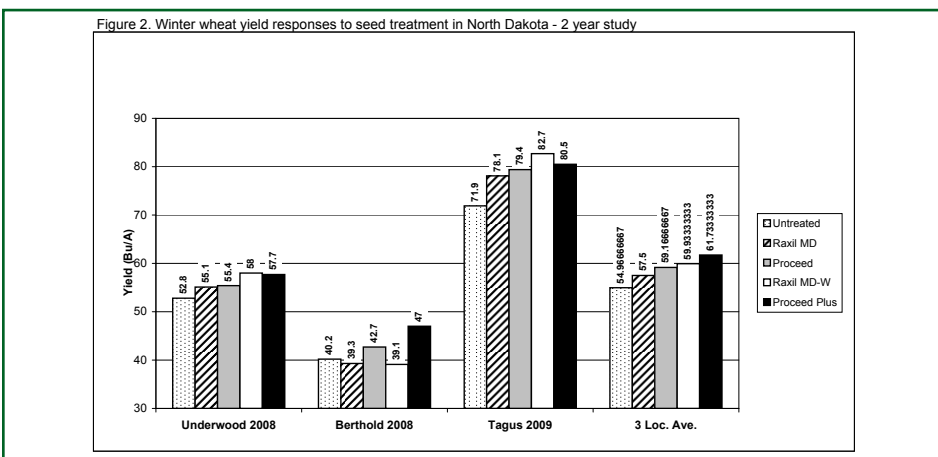
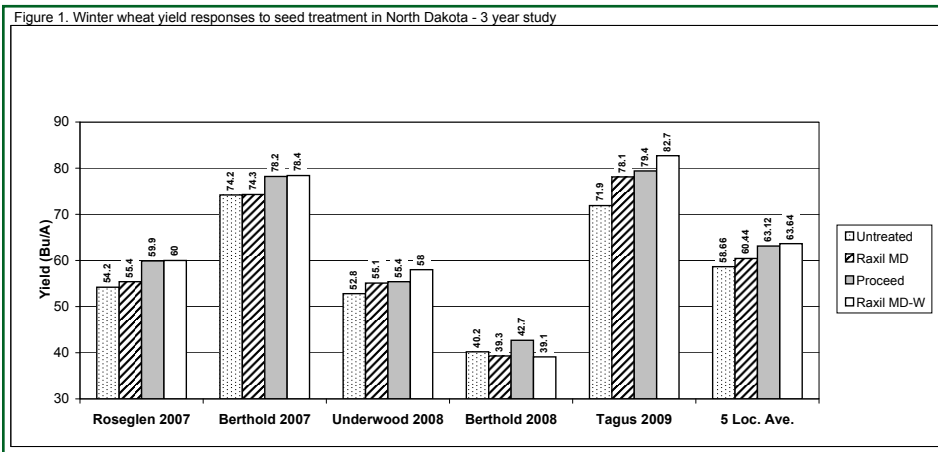
## Applications

These research findings agree with others from across the state of North Dakota and are supportive of utilizing fungicide and insecticide seed treatments on winter wheat. However, it is prudent to understand why and when seed treatments would be considered a "best management practice."

In these trials, winter wheat was no-till seeded in standing wheat stubble. Spring wheat and barley are also "host" crops for the common soil- and residue-borne root and seedling diseases that fungicide seed treatments are designed to ward off. The pathogen load would be expected to be greater when winter wheat is planted in wheat or barley stubble.

The need for seed treatments theoretically should be less when seeding winter wheat into canola or flax crop stubbles. We do not have any seed treatment data from those previous crops that would allow us to confidently make that recommendation.

Winter wheat is subject to winter-injury which can compromise its health even when we plant on time, apply starter phosphorus at planting and top-dress supplemental nitrogen at green-up in our efforts to maximize plant health. Plant injury that compromises plant health can create an opportunity for pathogens to invade the winter wheat plant. This may be a reason why winter wheat, may more consistently respond to seed treatments than other cereal crops.



# Unseeded Acres an Opportunity?

By Mark Akins PAg, CCA

Excessive May and June rains in many areas of the Prairies have significantly hampered seeding operations. The risk of lower yields and frost damage associated with late seeding has led many farmers to make the decision to leave fields unseeded. There have been estimates indicating that as much as 12.5 million acres have not been seeded this spring. Many growers are now looking for options for this land.

Winter wheat is a crop with many advantages. Economics, time management, pest management, and marketing flexibility have been some of the key drivers of the crop's increased interest. One thing that often reduces winter wheat acres is stubble availability for winter wheat planting. A successful winter wheat crop should be seeded in late August to early September into good standing stubble. Normally, this stubble is from a recently harvested crop. Having this stubble available in a timely fashion usually requires a lot of careful crop planning and management. A number of growers are quickly realizing that using their

unseeded chemfallow acres will remove the 'early harvest' challenge.

Before seeding winter wheat in chemfallow, it is important to recognize that the stubble is different than that found in a recently harvested crop. Chemfallow stubble has had an extra year of decomposition and is therefore much more brittle. What looks like good snow trapping stubble before seeding may appear quite different post seeding. To reduce loss of standing stubble do not cultivate or harrow your fallow. Also, minimize disturbance during seeding by seeding at slower speeds and using a drill with wider row spacing and narrow openers. Wider seeding equipment will also lessen the amount of stubble damaged by tractor traffic over the field. Waiting until after weeds bolt to take weed control measures may also increase chemfallow's snow trapping potential.

## Here are a few other tips for successful winter wheat production:

- Plan for seeding. Get equipment ready and have seed and fertilizer ordered and ready for seeding.
- Seed early (August 20th to

September 15th) and seed shallow (0.5 to 1.0 inch deep) to get strong healthy plants before freeze up.

- Fertilize for a healthy start by applying 20-25 lbs of P2O5.
- Choose the nitrogen method that fits your particular farm and farming practices as there are various nitrogen timing, placement and source options. Chemfallow may have higher levels of available nitrogen but test the soil and match your rate with yield goals.
- Conduct the management of other nutrients similar to a spring wheat crop.
- Control perennial and grassy weeds prior to seeding. To reduce risk of wheat streak mosaic virus, avoid seeding adjacent to green cereal crops.

Fall seeding winter wheat may be a solution for some of the unseeded acreage in the Prairies. With some attention paid to maximize stubble for snow trapping, unseeded acres may be the first step to a successful 2011 crop. If you would like more information on winter wheat production, visit [wintercereals.ca](http://wintercereals.ca).



Waiting after weeds are taller before conducting spray operations will improve a field's ability to trap snow.

Photo courtesy of L. Durand