



# Winter Cereals

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## *Sustainability in Action*

## MEDIA RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Start planning for your Winter Wheat Spring Assessment

**Edmonton, AB., May 7, 2010** – A proper spring assessment is an important part of successful winter wheat production. And as the weather heats up, now's the time to start putting your assessment plans into motion.

Assessing the crop condition early is difficult as brown leaves do not necessarily denote winter kill and green leaves are not a guarantee of winter survival. The only true test is to examine the crown for development of new white roots. The crown is the area where the stem meets the roots and is usually located one inch below the soil surface. Most producers do their spring assessment around May 15<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> to allow enough time for the crop to re-grow.

If the crop has good potential (little patchiness and good roots) then keep it. If it is patchy and thin you may want to discuss the situation with an agronomist or your crop insurance agent. An optimum plant stand is 20-30 plants per square foot. Keep in mind that winter wheat has the ability to aggressively tiller which usually compensates for lower crop densities. Research has indicated that winter wheat stands with as few as eight plants per square foot can still yield almost 50 bushels per acre.

Thin winter wheat stands often need a little help to reach their potential. An early nitrogen application will assist plants to tiller and fill in the stand. Also a thin stand is less competitive against weeds, particularly grassy weeds, so scouting and timely weed management is increasingly important.

The harsh climate on the Prairies and historical experiences with winter kill often magnify the focus on winter kill. But in reality, losing a winter wheat crop over the winter is pretty rare. A higher percentage of winter wheat is lost to winter kill in Kansas than in Western Canada.

According to Paul Thoroughgood, Regional Agronomist with Ducks Unlimited Canada and partner in the *Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action* program, good management is important for all crops, but especially important for winter wheat.

"First time winter wheat growers often manage the crop like a spring wheat crop. Due to winter wheat's higher yield potential management decisions can really pay off," says Thoroughgood. "Successful winter wheat growers plan ahead to consistently achieve successful results."

Paul Thiel, VP Innovation and Public Affairs with Bayer CropScience believes winter wheat is an attractive choice for many growers across Western Canada, and says the *Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action* program showcases the important role winter wheat plays in sustainable agriculture.

"Winter Cereals: Sustainability in Action combines investment in research, working with producers and engaging additional partners to increase winter wheat acreage across the Prairies, and highlights an

agricultural practice that is profitable and wildlife-friendly. Together with Ducks Unlimited, we're hoping to help producers realize the benefits of including winter cereals in sustainable cropping rotations across the Prairies."

To help you plan your next winter wheat crop, visit [wintercereals.ca](http://wintercereals.ca), click on 'Growing Winter Wheat', then 'Tools' to find the Weatherman-ager, an online planning resource that will help you plan spring seeding to ensure stubble availability for seeding in the fall.

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**Ducks Unlimited Canada**  
Conserving Canada's Wetlands

#### **About Ducks Unlimited Canada**

We are Canada's most trusted and respected conservation organization. (*Ipsos Reid and NRG Surveys*) Our mission is to conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.

Additional information about Ducks Unlimited Canada is available at [ducks.ca](http://www.ducks.ca) <<http://www.ducks.ca>> .



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Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the fields of health care, nutrition and high-tech materials. Bayer CropScience AG, a subsidiary of Bayer AG with annual sales of about EUR 5.8 billion (2007), is one of the world's leading innovative crop science companies in the areas of crop protection, non-agricultural pest control, seeds and plant biotechnology. The company offers an outstanding range of products and extensive service backup for modern, sustainable agriculture and for non-agricultural applications. Bayer CropScience has a global workforce of about 17,800 and is represented in more than 120 countries.

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