



MEDIA RELEASE:

1, 2, 3: Winter wheat grading and variety classification changes

July 20, 2011 (Calgary, Alberta)—Starting Aug. 1, Canadian Western Red Winter (CWRW) wheat will fall into one of three grades: No. 1, No. 2 and a new grade, No. 3.

To be graded No. 1 CWRW and No. 2 CWRW, winter wheat must have a minimum protein content of 11%. Winter wheat with less than 11% protein will be classified No. 3 CWRW. The new grade of wheat could still be used for milling.

The new minimum protein levels for No. 1 and No. 2 winter wheat are “there for marketing purposes. Customers want it—are demanding higher protein,” says Daryl Beswitherick, an inspection specialist with the Canadian Grain Commission’s Quality Assurance department in Winnipeg.

Protein is a key ingredient in bread, contributing to its volume and crumb structure.

Winter wheat producer John Hopkins, the director of Region 3 with the Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission, says, “The changes are good for Alberta producers. Most of them are focused on the higher-quality end of the market. We recognize the new grade No. 3 classification meets the needs of producers who can’t quite meet protein content, but still have a good milling-quality grain.”

Beswitherick says based on protein levels most winter wheat would typically be graded No. 1 and No. 2, although about 50% of the 2010 crop would have been graded No. 3 or feed quality. He credits poor growing and harvest conditions for the below-normal results.

The Canadian Grain Commission has been promoting and advertising the grade changes throughout the past year. Beswitherick says he knows of no producer concerns or complaints about the changes.

In fact, the AWWPC and the Canadian Grain Commission, along with the Western Standards Committee, numerous producers and other stakeholder groups, agreed to the new grading structure changes in 2010 after thorough research and multiple stakeholder discussions.

The same groups and individuals also agreed to change fusarium tolerances and reclassify some winter wheat varieties.

The tolerances for fusarium-damaged kernels (FDK) will be reduced from 1.0% to 0.8% and 2.0% to 1% for No. 1 and No. 2 CWRW grades respectively, starting Aug. 1, 2011. The new tolerances more accurately predict the current relationship between Fusarium damage and deoxynivalenol (DON) concentration, helping ensure CWRW wheat better meets export and domestic requirements for DON.

On Aug. 1, 2013, CDC Kestrel, CDC Clair, CDC Harrier, CDC Falcon and CDC Raptor will be re-assigned to the Canada Western General Purpose (CWGP) class. This will make Radiant, Flourish, AC Bellatrix, AC Readymade, AC Tempest, CDC Buteo, CDC Osprey, McClintock, Moats and Norstar the only varieties eligible for the CWRW classification. The Canadian Grain Commission and the industry is making the move to help ensure the CWRW class produces consistent, high-quality milling flour.

"These new specifications reflect changes in the marketplace and provide customers, especially millers, with a product that better meets their exact needs," AWWPC's executive director Rick Istead says. "Our Commission supports the Canadian Grain Commission's effort to make CWRW a more consistent, high-quality milling product that can compete with other hard red winter wheats, including those grown in the United States."

"Grain grades and standards are evaluated regularly to make sure that they continue to meet the needs of everyone involved in the grain industry, from producers to processors to buyers," says Elwin Hermanson, chair of the Western Standards Committee and chief commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission.

The Alberta Winter Wheat Producers Commission is a provincial grower organization focused on a strong and sustainable winter wheat industry for the benefit of all Alberta producers. The AWWPC leads efforts to make winter wheat a viable crop option by supporting innovative research, developing valued-added marketing programs, and providing producers with relevant and timely information.

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