

# WHEAT REPORT



## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



**Kent Erickson**  
**Chairman**

**C**ollaboration. Everywhere you turn there seems to be no end of industries and organizations announcing their partnerships, joint ventures and collaborations. In truth, from a wheat and barley perspective, collaboration makes sense for many reasons—most wheat farmers are also barley farmers and vice versa. Both grains have similar end uses, and both are faced with common issues relating to export markets and the need for innovation.

For the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) and Alberta Barley,

collaboration is a philosophy we have embraced and something that our respective organizations have truly committed to—for the benefit of producers and our industry as a whole. We started by sharing office space. Then we partnered on several of our regional meetings. In time, we hired shared staff to serve both organizations in key positions such as policy and accounting. Now, this new magazine, *GrainsWest*, is the latest tangible example of that philosophy at work, and of our organizations' joint commitment to demonstrating true value to Alberta's wheat and barley producers for their check-off dollars.

This is a time of opportunity in Canadian agriculture, because farmers like myself have been given marketing freedom and the ability to diversify our industry. We need to keep ourselves informed and educated on everything from the most up-to-

date research to trade agreements, new marketing opportunities, and political events that have the potential to shape our industry and impact our ability to do business. *GrainsWest*, the first publication of its kind, will provide producers with valuable information on those topics of wide appeal and current interest, and it will serve as the authoritative voice for barley and wheat. *GrainsWest* will benefit producers because it focuses on growing Western Canada's grain industry—our industry.

Collaboration has enabled us to put everything in place we need to make this magazine a success: the commitment of two like-minded organizations, an editorial advisory board of industry leaders, and qualified, knowledgeable and experienced staff. With that, we hope this magazine becomes an industry institution—one that will help producers make better, informed decisions on their farms for many years to come.

## GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE



**Doug Cornell**  
**General  
Manager**

**G**reetings on behalf of the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC). I want to welcome you to this inaugural edition of *GrainsWest*, our newest initiative, and the latest of several industry-leading collaborative efforts between the AWC and Alberta Barley. This publication features cutting-edge industry information, and key business updates from our respective organi-

zations, in a high-quality magazine for producers.

These are exciting times for Alberta's cereal grain industry. Together, the AWC and Alberta Barley have been able to embrace opportunities to be more cost effective to maximize producers' check-off dollars. This magazine is just one more way for us to bring our two crops together and demonstrate our collective approach and commitment to working smarter to advance the cereal grains industry as a whole.

As producer-directed, producer-funded organizations, one of our primary functions is to connect you, our members, with information that is valuable to you and your operations. So, as much as this initiative is about collaboration and demonstrating the effective use of producer funds, it is also about delivering timely, relevant and quality content that matters to you—content that keeps you engaged and informed, and ultimately helps to

improve your bottom line.

We have established *GrainsWest* to be a one-stop shop that offers feature articles and the most topical wheat and barley industry news that matters to you.

Although your commissions are here to represent you, the strength of our industry is dependent on the passion and participation of you, our producers. *GrainsWest* is your magazine, so we would like to hear from you. If you have comments, questions, suggestions or articles, please send them along to us.

Finally, I would like to thank the *GrainsWest* staff for all the hard work and time they put into this first issue. The AWC's investment in this new initiative will no doubt provide significant value to our producers.

## WHEAT WORLD

### Alberta Wheat Commission links in to social media

**F**ollow the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) on Twitter **@albertawheat** for research news, industry updates, AWC activities and more!

The AWC has launched a new Facebook page. Search "Alberta Wheat Commission" to "like" our page and learn more about how the AWC is putting your check-off dollars to work!



## Alberta Wheat Commission Regional Meetings

**T**he Alberta Wheat Commission held six regional meetings across the province this winter. The meetings included presentations on marketing and risk management and the Wheat 150 project.



Chairman Kent Erickson speaks at a regional meeting in Lacombe this past November.

Photo: Brian Kennedy

## SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH



**Lauren Comin**  
**Research**  
**Manager**

On Nov. 7, 2013, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Minister Gerry Ritz made a stop at Agri-Trade in Red Deer, AB, where he announced the approval of a \$25.2 million dollar program to support the development of new and improved wheat varieties.

The project, called the *National Wheat Improvement Project* (NWIP, otherwise known as the Wheat Cluster) is part of the federal *Growing Forward 2* (GF2) program. With 50 projects in total, the NWIP combines several areas of plant breeding from conventional to cutting edge technology, including the development and application of biotechnology and bioinformatics tools to support and accelerate breeding activities.

The specific outcomes of the NWIP include:

- High yielding varieties of all major wheat classes grown across Canada
- Improved disease resistance
- Maintained quality standards to ensure the premium value of Canadian wheat in international markets

The Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC), along with the Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF) and the Canadian Field Crop Research Alliance (CFCRA) in eastern Canada, are the “industry” or producer investors, making the NWIP a Canada-wide approach. GF2 contributed \$12.5 million to be com-

## Producers partner with Government of Canada to strengthen wheat breeding



From left to right: Garth Patterson (WGRF), Gerry Ritz (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada minister), Keith De-genhardt (WGRF), Earl Dreesen (MP), Terry Young (AWC), Crosby Devitt (CFCRA), at the *National Wheat Improvement Project* Nov. 7, 2013 in Red Deer.

bined with industry’s contribution of \$12.7 million.

“Alberta producers need new varieties to overcome the evolving challenges we are faced with,” said Kent Erickson, chairman of the AWC’s Board of Directors.

Supporting innovative research into breeding and agronomy is a key part of the AWC’s mandate.

“By partnering with the Government of Canada, we are able to increase the value of our members’ investment,” added Erickson.

The AWC works with producers and scientists across western Canada to ensure that producer priorities are matched with the research capabilities and interests of government, academic and private organizations, with the overall goal of increasing grower profitability.

The university programs covered under the NWIP, including Dr. Dean Spaner’s Canadian Prairie Spring and Hard Red Spring programs at the University of Alberta, ensure that training is provided to undergraduate and

graduate students—the next generation of wheat breeders.

“Agronomy, breeding and related disciplines cannot be taught if the universities do not have vibrant, active and relevant programs,” said Spaner.

The NWIP approval comes at a time of uncertainty about AAFC’s future participation in public wheat breeding. There are plans in place for AAFC to exit the variety registration process earlier, passing on the task of finishing lines to private industry.

Over 75 per cent of the wheat currently grown across the Prairies is the result of the AAFC program. Although the anticipated changes would cause a drastic shift, the Wheat Cluster will directly support public wheat breeding efforts in Alberta.

“AAFC scientists have done a tremendous job in the past in producing reliable new lines for our region. Producers want to ensure that these efforts continue,” said Erickson.

For more information about the AWC’s research program, please visit [www.albertawheat.com](http://www.albertawheat.com).

## MARKET CENTS



**Jeff Jackson**  
**Markets**  
**Manager**

### Meeting Major Market Demands

**T**his November, the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) had the opportunity to represent our producers in Southeast Asia and China. The trade mission, coordinated by the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi), allowed AWC to gain market intelligence and international perspective as we spoke with millers and bakers in China, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia.

It truly is a great big world. China has an estimated population of 1.35 billion; South East Asia has a population of 593 million.

These are big numbers, but what do they mean? To give perspective, the population of Beijing is estimated at about 21 million people. This one city has a consumer base larger than the combined populations of Canada's four western provinces.

China and Southeast Asia combined represent nearly 28 per cent of the world's population. These regions are expected to grow in population by 200 million people by 2030, with urbanization and disposable income increasing, as well.

What does this mean to an Alberta wheat grower? Increased demand!

Alberta is blessed to be geograph-

ically aligned with Asia, which means our wheat has the most economical access to the natural port of departure, Vancouver. However, we need more than simple geography.

What influences a miller's appetite for wheat? Like anyone in business, they will use what provides the best potential for profit.

Buyers of wheat want to understand exactly how each season's wheat will perform in their mills and they want to know it as soon as possible. Bakers need a consistent product and millers need to supply specific flours for specific needs. If one region of the world has quality issues, other regions will be sought as replacement.

Cigi plays an important role here. With a reputation all over the world for independent assessment of the quality of Canadian wheat, Cigi is relied on to provide real data on the milling and baking performance of the wheat you grow. This trusted source of information proves valuable in encouraging buyers to look to Canada for their supply of raw ingredients.

During our meetings with nearly 500 people from various milling and baking companies, we were able to see presentations on production statistics, milling efficiencies, and baking or noodle-making properties from the 2013 harvest. Access to that information and the experts that present it are invaluable in the promotion of Canadian wheat.

In the coming months, we will touch base with all the major markets of the world and bring that market knowledge back to Alberta and its growers. The market connections made will guide us in our efforts on both the market development and research fronts. Our aim is to enhance the bottom line of every wheat grower in Alberta.

For more information on markets, visit [www.albertawheat.com](http://www.albertawheat.com).

## MEET THE AWC STAFF



**Doug Cornell**  
**General Manager**

**D**oug Cornell, general manager of the Alberta Wheat Commission, joined the organization in August 2013.

Cornell grew up on a purebred cattle farm in northwestern Ontario. After completing a degree in agriculture at the University of Guelph, he moved out West. He began working for Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development as a district agriculturalist, and then as a commodity marketing specialist. His career then led him to UFA Co-operative, where he led a strategic opportunity team.

Having honed his skills in both startup and corporate environments, Cornell brings to the organization a strong business background. He is an entrepreneurial manager with an extensive background in agricultural production and management, commodity marketing and stakeholder and customer relations.

Cornell also has a passion for identifying emerging technologies and putting them to work for the agriculture industry. He is looking forward to advancing the Alberta wheat industry and helping its producers thrive.