

POTENTIAL SAVINGS FOR ALBERTA'S WHEAT FARMERS FOLLOWING WCD EXPIRATION



Victoria Russell
Communications Specialist

At the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC), we invest in your bottom line. We want you to see a return on investment right at your farm gate, and our producer-led model ensures that all of our programming is advancing your interests and strengthening the wheat industry. Funded by a check-off on all Alberta wheat sales, AWC puts your check-off dollars to work through innovative research, market development, policy advocacy, and communications and extension.

Currently, Alberta wheat farmers are accustomed to seeing two wheat check-offs on their grain cash ticket: the AWC check-off of 70 cents per tonne and the Western Canadian Deduction (WCD) of 48 cents per tonne, for a total of \$1.18 per tonne.

The WCD was established in 2012 by the federal government as a transitional program to maintain support for research and market development that was previously funded by the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), while giving provincial wheat commissions time to get established. Looking ahead to August 2017 when the WCD is set to expire, AWC is proud to be operating at full capacity with mature program areas led by farmers and carried out by our management team.

Subject to passing of a motion at our annual general meeting in January 2017, the board of directors and management of AWC are recommending that Alberta producers move to a single wheat check-off of \$1.09 per

tonne—a nine-cent reduction from the two levies. In doing so, AWC will assume all of the funding obligations of the WCD, including the development of new wheat varieties and the market support activities of the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi). Most of the top wheat varieties grown in Alberta today, including CDC Go, AC Stettler and AC Foremost, were developed with the support of producer check-off dollars administered by the Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF).

Our western Canadian counterparts, the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission and the Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association, are also well positioned to continue their work to support growers' bottom lines, and will also transition to a single check-off.

What does the end of the WCD mean for Alberta's wheat farmers? The transition will reduce costs at point of sale by nine cents per tonne while consolidating all research and marketing activities under AWC in a model that is directly accountable to farmers. AWC will continue its full menu of programming, including an annual research budget of approximately \$1.9 million, while absorbing all obligations of WGRF for variety development and continuing to support Cigi, in collaboration with our fellow provincial wheat commissions.

With a revised strategic plan to be launched this year, AWC has a bright future ahead to continue investing in your bottom line. In the next three pages, learn more about how AWC is putting your check-off dollars to work, and get a sneak preview of some of the deliverables that will be part of our new strategic plan. We also encourage farmers to visit albertawheat.com to learn more about the full range of programming, initiatives and partnerships that AWC is proud to carry out on behalf of our farmers.

Your check-off dollars at work

The Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) is driving long-term profitability for wheat and Alberta's wheat farmers through robust programs built to create new opportunities and address issues that affect farmers. This work is made possible by a check-off on wheat sales that is invested in farmer-directed research, market development, policy advocacy, and communications and extension - all with the end goal of supporting your bottom line.

Recent highlights:

Public Private Producer Partnership (4P)



Thanks to a partnership between AWC, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and CANTERRA SEEDS Ltd., farmers can continue to look forward to premium access to premium CPS wheat varieties through the breeding program at the Lethbridge Research and Development Centre.

Investment in wheat research and development



AWC recently invested \$740,625 in five wheat-related research projects that leveraged an additional \$622,625 from other funding partners. Through this investment, farmers can learn new management practices for hail-damaged crops, advanced monitoring to better understand stripe rust, improved water-use efficiency for better yield and drought tolerance, low-cost testing technology for mycotoxin detection, and new tools to improve wheat grain yield under normal and abiotic stress conditions.

Visit pdqinfo.ca

AWC launched a website that is contributing to a more transparent and efficient grain market with daily market prices for five major commodities.

Sustainability extension and partnership



The four crop commissions (Alberta Wheat, Alberta Barley, Alberta Canola and Alberta Pulse Growers) have collaboratively implemented a new sustainability extension co-ordinator role to build on the crop commissions' work to address the growing consumer-driven demand for food produced in alignment with internationally recognized sustainability standards and best management practices.





Team Canada Marketing



AWC is part of the Team Canada approach to wheat marketing with Cereals Canada and other members of the value chain. AWC participates in New Crop Missions to ensure market growth and strengthen the Canadian brand.

The AgCoalition



AWC was a catalyst in the formation of this producer-driven group of 29 organizations united by a common industry goal to foster a culture of farm safety in Alberta. Visit agcoalition.ca to learn more.



Ag Transport Coalition

AWC has committed to fostering improvements to our rail transportation system through a \$75,000 per year investment in the Ag Transport Coalition. Formed by producer and industry groups, this *Growing Forward 2* initiative is mandated to monitor and review opportunities to improve the agriculture supply chain.

We encourage you to visit albertawheat.com to learn more about how we are putting your check-off dollars to work through these and other AWC-led initiatives.

Our path forward: highlights for upcoming strategic check-off investment

As we look ahead, AWC will continue on our path to put your check-off dollars to work by strategically investing in programming that strengthens our industry and supports your bottom line.

Some highlights of how your check-off dollars will be invested in the future:

- ✓ We will take a more active role in the future of variety development, ensuring that Alberta's wheat farmers have continuous access to new, premium varieties that offer better returns.
- ✓ We will build programming that celebrates agricultural production and instills nostalgia among consumers about where their food comes from.
- ✓ We will continue to collaborate with industry to define a future model of international market development in wheat.
- ✓ We will build an established network between researchers and extension organizations to provide producers with regionally adapted agronomic information.
- ✓ We will create a national sustainability program that meets the needs of international buyers while facilitating stewardship at the farm level.



albertawheat.com

@albertawheat



PUSHING THE YIELD ENVELOPE

Advanced agronomic practices in wheat, barley and pea crops maximize yield and harvestability

Irene Lam
Research and Producer
Engagement Intern

Innovative research is one of the most important drivers that sustain the competitive advantages Alberta farmers enjoy. As such, the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) invests approximately \$1.9 million annually of your check-off dollars in projects that provide innovative tools and solutions to improve crop performance and net profitability. Sheri Strydhorst's project "Advanced agronomic practices in wheat, barley and pea crops to maximize yield and harvestability" is one of many projects in AWC's research portfolio that has the potential to help ensure better returns on your farm.

Strydhorst, an agronomy research scientist with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, is conducting research on advanced agronomic practices in wheat in a three-year project funded by AWC and other organizations. Field trials incorporate different management practices to maximize harvestability, yields, quality and, ultimately, profitability.

According to Strydhorst, this type of research is necessary for Canadian wheat to remain competitive in future global markets.

"Farmers must continue to improve, and this study will allow them to grow

more wheat by using crop inputs more efficiently," she said.

The project is unique in that trials are located across all wheat-growing regions of Alberta. Current farmer practices are mimicked as closely as possible so that results can be replicated on farms across the province.

While the study is not yet complete, initial results indicate a significant yield response to advanced agronomic management (in-crop UAN fertilizer application of 34kg N/ha + Agrotain to prevent nitrogen loss; Manipulator plant growth regulator (PGR); dual fungicide application) versus standard agronomic management (no in-crop UAN application; no PGR; no fungicide) for wheat varieties.

In addition, Strydhorst found that the interaction between cultivar and management practice had a significant impact on yield and harvestability. Wheat varieties such as AC Foremost, Belvoir, CDC Go, Coleman and Thorsby had significantly higher yields with advanced management. Other cultivars examined, such as AAC Penhold, AC Andrew, Harvest and

CDC Stanley, obtained less-significant yields with advanced management. These results together suggest that only certain varieties see a significant boost with advanced agronomic practice. Therefore, efficient use of advanced inputs could be achieved if inputs were only applied on responsive varieties.

Strydhorst's long-term goal is to identify which varieties are the most responsive to advanced inputs so that she can develop variety-specific agronomic management packages for newly registered varieties in the future.

Strydhorst understands the importance of agronomic research to a producer's bottom line on a personal level. "Much of my success as an agronomic research scientist can be attributed to my farming connections," she said. "My husband and I have a grain farm at Neerlandia so I live the ups and downs, stresses and joys, of crop production first hand."

More information about this project can be found in a video available at www.albertawheat.com through the research portal.



The Bon Accord cropwalk was an opportunity for producers and industry to see research investment in action.

ALL FOR ONE

Collaboration in the crop sector is key to success

Alberta Barley works with the Alberta Canola Producers Commission (ACPC), the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission (APG) and the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) on a regular basis to better serve Alberta's producers.

Alberta Barley chairman Mike Ammeter said he believes working together is the best strategy for crop commissions and their members to effect change.

"Although we do have our individual issues that are unique to each crop, at the end of the day most Alberta farmers probably grow some of them, if not all of them," Ammeter said. "Let's all be a little island and do our own thing? That's not productive."

Here are some of our current collaborative projects:

Alberta Farm Sustainability Extension Working Group

Recently, the four major crop commissions joined together to create the Alberta Farm Sustainability Extension Working Group (AFSE), represented by extension co-ordinator Jolene Noble of Manning, AB.

"We are trying to raise awareness about international sustainable sourcing standards, and see where Alberta is in terms of sustainability," Noble said. The first step AFSE took was to commission Ipsos to conduct a telephone survey of approximately 400 crop producers in Alberta.

The survey follows the 2015 Sustainability Certification Pilot, which assessed 32 farmer directors and their ability to meet four international agri-



Team Alberta and the Grain Growers of Canada met with important stakeholders in April 2016.

culture sustainability standards.

"Sustainability is not just about the environment. There are three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economical," Noble said. "We are continuously looking to improve on all fronts. It's important for the farmers' future, the next generation, and for Alberta's agricultural future."

Regional meetings

Each year, the crop commissions host regional meetings around the province. These meetings are intended to update producers on the status of each commission, as well as draw in new members and hold elections.

Collaborating on regional meetings means more than saving money. While most of Alberta's producers grow some or all of the top four crops, taking the time to attend four different meetings just isn't feasible. By working together and giving farmers the chance to attend two or three meetings at once, these collaborations benefit all of Alberta's crop producers.

Team Alberta

Starting in the 2014/15 crop year, Alberta Barley, ACPC, APG and AWC have joined together as Team Alberta. This group, designed to collaborate on policy issues affecting Alberta's

producers, began by travelling to Ottawa, ON, to meet with politicians and industry stakeholders.

Team Alberta has now become a year-round collaboration effort, and sends out a quarterly newsletter to parliamentarians to continue communications on behalf of the province's growers.

In April 2016, Team Alberta joined the Grain Growers of Canada on a policy mission to Ottawa. Transportation and trade were the topics at the top of the discussion list. With the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement talks in full swing, identifying trading partners and determining how to get Canadian crops from point A to point B have become important agriculture policy topics.

"We quite often ended up back on transportation because, as I would often say, we can have all these trade agreements, but if I can't get my production out of the country to meet market demand, the trade agreement doesn't matter," Ammeter said.

Following the Team Alberta trip, Minister of Transport Marc Garneau announced an extension of provisions within the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, a move celebrated by the crop commissions and Alberta producers.



ALBERTA BARLEY ELECTIONS 101

Are you interested in joining Alberta Barley but don't know where to get started? The following is a breakdown of the Alberta Barley roles and election process.

Only eligible producers—those who have grown and sold barley to a licensed dealer in one of the last three crop years—can be nominated to join Alberta Barley as a director, director-at-large or delegate.

Directors

Alberta Barley directors work as a board to determine and set the strategic direction of the organization.

To run for a director position in their region, eligible producers must gather 10 signatures from other eligible producers in their region. Once nomi-

inated, nominees must give written consent to accept their nomination.

Once elected, a director is eligible to serve two back-to-back, three-year terms.

Director-at-large

In addition to the six director positions, Alberta Barley's board of directors includes three director-at-large positions. These directors work to represent the province's barley farmers as a whole.

In order to be nominated for a director-at-large position, an eligible producer must also collect 10 signatures from eligible producers in Alberta; nominations in this case are not specific to the region in which the nominee operates.

Delegate

Delegates work with their regional director to form a committee that informs the Alberta Barley board of directors about regional issues and opportunities. Delegates are able to sit on Alber-

ta Barley committees, such as research, policy and market development.

Unlike director positions, delegates are nominated from the floor during a regional meeting. Delegate terms last two years.

Elections 101

Once nominated, director and delegate nominees attend their local regional meeting. If there are more nominees than available positions, eligible producers at the meeting vote to determine the producer for the role.

If a position becomes vacant, eligible producers can be nominated and elected into empty positions during Alberta Barley's annual general meeting. The Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council can also appoint directors on the basis of a recommendation from the board of directors at any time.

For more information or nomination forms, visit albertabarley.com or call 1-800-265-9111.

Alberta Barley
25TH ANNIVERSARY

Save
The
Date

2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
December 7-8, 2016
Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel

CELEBRATING
25
YEARS

2016 director and delegate openings

Region 1

Three delegate positions open

Region 2

Seven delegate positions open

Region 3

One director position open

Region 4

One director position open and four delegate positions open

Region 5

Two delegate positions open

Region 6

One delegate position open

One director-at-large position is open and can be nominated from regions 1, 2, 3 or 6.

The deadline for applications is 4 p.m. on Oct. 31, 2016.

REGION MAP



An interactive version of the region map is available at albertabarley.com/regionmap

ALBERTA'S PRODUCERS GIVEN MORE TIME TO RAISE RAIL TRANSPORT POLICY CONCERNS

By Ellen Cottee

Government policy can have a serious impact on Alberta's producers, and few policy concerns are more important and contentious than transportation.

Introduced in the 2013/14 crop year, the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act (Bill C-30) was a response to a serious grain transportation backlog that developed over the crop season. Containing both temporary and permanent provisions, Bill C-30 ensured rail service levels were maintained to clear up the backlog.

These provisions included holding rail companies responsible for failing to ship grain at a minimum volume set by the Government of Canada and for expanding interswitching limits, leading to more competition and flexibility.

However, the temporary provisions were set to expire July 31, 2016. Many producers saw this as a serious problem, as Bill C-30 was widely regarded as a step toward improved railway service—an ongoing concern for Canadian grain farmers.

In April 2016, Minister of Transport Marc Garneau announced that provisions within Bill C-30—namely rail interswitching and grain movement minimums—would be extended for another year. The extension of these



With the extension of provisions within the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, Alberta's crop commissions have more time to consult with stakeholders on transportation policy.

provisions gives producers “a little breathing room,” according to Alberta Barley chairman Mike Ammeter.

“It gives us a bigger window to try and work on some of the issues,” Ammeter said. “In my view, regardless of what they say about competition, we don’t really have competition. It’s a duopoly.”

Grain farmers in Canada have two options when it comes to shipping their grain by rail: Canadian Pacific Railway (CP Rail) or Canadian National Railway (CN Rail). Most farming communities in Canada have only one realistic option for shipping the majority of their grain.

The announcement to extend provisions came one week after Team Alberta sat down with representatives from the Ministry of Transport to discuss Alberta’s crop-specific concerns.

“I think our Team Alberta outreach initiative was incredibly timely, but was only in part responsible for the result,” said Shannon Sereda, market development and policy manager for Alberta Barley. “Having a physical presence at this time was fortunate, but presenting a strong, collective message that is shared by all stakeholders was key in collaboratively extending the provision.”

Team Alberta has already enacted a plan of action for the upcoming year.

“We have already reached out to both of the ministers of agriculture and transportation to express the need for consultation with the grain industry,” Sereda said.

“We will continue to engage with both the provincial and federal government and push for long-term solutions that are backed by legislation.”

MEET THE STAFF



Shannon Sereda
**Market Development and
Policy Manager**

Shannon Sereda joined the Alberta Barley team as market development and policy manager in January 2016. Shannon holds a bachelor’s degree in management and a M.Sc. related to sustainability. Formerly a commercial officer with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, as well as a trade commissioner with the Embassy of Canada in Quito, Ecuador, Shannon’s experience is an asset to Alberta Barley.

While her grandparents were third-generation farmers in the Peace Country, working with Alberta Barley has provided Shannon with her first in-depth introduction to the business of agriculture.

“I am immensely enjoying the agricultural sector and find it dynamic, challenging and different every day,” she said.

Being involved in both policy and market development is particularly rewarding, she said. “The synergies that exist between the two roles give me a good understanding of the many sides of an issue or opportunity.”

Outside of work, she balances her life as mom to five-year-old Jax with her love of gardening and mountain sports.