

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Winter wheat has an important role to play in sustainable agriculture on the Prairies. Not only is it one of the most profitable crops in Western Canada, it is a conservation-conscious crop that has many environmental benefits for farmers and wildlife. It can also be used as an ecological tool to manage weeds, disease, and resistance to crop protection products when implementing integrated pest management strategies.

Benefits to Farmers

Experienced no-till winter wheat producers often cite the following reasons for making the crop part of their rotation:

- Improved profit versus other cereal alternatives,
- Improved profitability of their overall rotation,
- Improved control of soil erosion,
- More efficient use of crop moisture,
- Higher crop productivity,
- Reduced tillage,
- More efficient use of crop inputs,
- Improved habitat for wildlife.

Winter wheat is a great example of how a sustainable vision for the agricultural landscape includes both profitable agriculture and habitat conservation. Winter wheat has the potential to transform cropping systems on the Canadian Prairies.

Benefits to Wildlife

Many species of birds build their nests in agricultural fields. Unfortunately, spring seeding operations coincide with peak nesting periods leading to the destruction of most nests. Fall-sown crops provide improved nesting habitat for birds since field operations during nesting periods are greatly reduced. Ducks Unlimited Canada research shows that ducks that choose to nest in winter wheat are 24 times more productive than those who choose to nest in spring-sown cereals.

More information about winter wheat environmental benefits can be found at www.growwinterwheat.ca.



Western Winter Wheat Initiative

Fact Card

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