

Saddle Up for Summer!

Western Crop Innovations Newsletter Vol. II: July 2024



Message from the Board of Directors

WCI's Interim Board is pleased to announce that effective July 1, staff members are officially contracted as Western Crop Innovations employees, marking a fresh chapter for the organization!

In recent weeks, the Interim Board, Interim ED Mark Olson, and Ex Officio Board Member John Conrad have engaged extensively with elected officials at both provincial and federal levels to raise awareness about our unique positioning and sustainable funding model as a research center. These efforts have been bolstered by a generous funding commitment from our key stakeholder, Alberta Grains. Their support has been eagerly anticipated and reflects the organization's desire to participate in shaping the future of WCI. AB Grains' leadership in this regard will be pivotal in securing long-term funding.

Following the success of our Saddle-Up Lunch on July 10 in Calgary, we will continue to engage stakeholders through various events and meetings throughout the summer, including Ag in Motion and AgSmart.

Looking forward, the development of a comprehensive Business Plan remains a top priority. We eagerly await feedback from members, staff, and advisors as we work towards finalizing a draft document by October 31st.



Feature Update: Saddle-Up Lunch



Thank you to everyone who braved the heat to attend our Saddle-Up Lunch last week, hosted at the beautiful Sunterra Keynote patio in Calgary!

Guests enjoyed a Stampede-style BBQ luncheon and gained insights into the importance of genetic advancement in products to meet customer demand, courtesy of Sunterra CEO Ray Price. This was followed by a stimulating discussion on the future of crop research in Western Canada featuring esteemed panelists: Kevin Sich of Rahr Malting, Sheri Strydhorst of Sheri's Ag Consulting Inc., and Lori Oatway from WCI. The event provided valuable learning opportunities for attendees; eliciting constructive feedback and innovative ideas for guiding WCI's future direction. We eagerly anticipate hosting more such enlightening events and discussions in the future.

Special thanks to Kim McConnell for moderating this event, and our panel discussion.

Recent Activities



In the Field

Planting our rotations and fill areas was wrapped up in June, and plots have been maintained and monitored through the early portion of the growing season. Notetaking has begun for emergence, heading, and general observations. Additionally, our pathology team has been hard at work inoculating and irrigating our disease nurseries at CDC North and in Lacombe!

Crossing

Crossing season is upon us! The variety development pipeline begins with parent crossing, which is performed meticulously by hand. This makes it an exciting but laborious time of year



for WCI. This year, we are producing 126 crosses for barley and 85 for triticale in our endeavour to develop new, winning varieties! Crossing began in the first week of July, and was completed July 16.

Extension & Knowledge Transfer

Ag In Motion

Members of the WCI staff are on-site at AIM this week! Keep an eye out for our banners in the SeedNet plots (Booth 101). Here, you'll find plots with some of WCI's varieties licensed by SeedNet, as well as two of our upcoming barley and triticale lines. Thank you, SeedNet, for generously providing the plot spaces to feature some of our advanced materials!

Visit us at AgSmart!

Western Crop Innovations will be exhibiting at AgSmart in Olds AB, July 30th and 31st! Find us at Booth 342 and Crop Plot 108 - location information can be found on the [site map](#). Be sure to catch some of our presentations at the event:

- “Unlocking Agricultural Potential: The Virtues of Triticale Cultivation”
 - Day 1 (July 30) – 11 AM & Day 2 (July 31) – 10 AM, Crop Plots
- “Barley for the Future: Breeding Solutions for a Changing Environment”
 - Day 1 (July 30) – 1:15 PM & Day 2 (July 31) – 3 PM, Crop Plots
- “A Technological Time Machine: How Modern Techniques Will Bring You New Seed Faster,” Panel Discussion Hosted by the Alberta Seed Guide (*feat. WCI staff*)
 - Day 1 (July 30) – 11AM, Educational Tent 2
- “Revealing the Unseen: Enhancing Variety Selection Through Genomics and Quality Assessment”
 - Day 1 (July 30) – 3 PM, Crop Plots
- “Outpacing Evolution: Staying a Step Ahead with Disease Resistance in Cereal Crops”
 - Day 2 (July 31) – 10:45 AM, Crop Plots

Check out the AgSmart website for the full [schedule of events](#)! Tickets can be purchased through [our link to save 15%](#), or use the promo code **WCI24** at checkout.

Informal Micromalt Tour

We're happy to extend the invitation to join an informal tour of WCI's new micromalt plant installed at the Olds College teaching brewery! These tours are tentatively planned for 4:00



PM July 30 and 1:00 PM July 31, during the AgSmart event. If you are interested in attending, please [RSVP through this form](#) to receive more information!

Quarterly Stakeholder Meeting

WCI will be hosting its second quarterly Stakeholder Townhall meeting in August; the date and time remain TBD. Please watch your email for the invitation. The meeting will be hosted virtually; please come prepared with your questions for the interim board!

Recruitment

WCI is pleased to welcome Lauren Huolt, BComm, CPA, & CA as our new Chief Financial Officer! Lauren will be joining us August 6, 2024, after serving seven years in financial management at Vision Credit Union in Camrose, AB. Please refer to our July 16 news release for more information.

Project Progress

The final report on “Collaborative Testing and Development of Forage Barley Varieties for Western Canada - 2021F071R” was completed and submitted to RDAR, Alberta Milk and Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association in late June. As part of WCI’s mission to provide valuable agronomic information to farmers, a fact sheet summarizing the study findings is being developed for distribution to producers.

Contact Information

Keeley Bender, Communications Coordinator
(587) 436-0007

