

Spring Seeding & Micromalt Announcement

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Message from the Board of Directors

As the Interim Board continues to have individual consultations with stakeholders, we have approved by-laws that provide a membership model for WCI. Organizations will be granted membership status for core funding contributions to help cover transitional and operational costs. Based on their support level, WCI will provide representative votes to elect a new board at the first member meeting to be held before March 31, 2025. We will also seek input from the members towards our strategic, business, and science plans as those evolve this fall.

Feature Update: New Micromalt Unit Installed!

Exciting news from WCI! We're thrilled to announce the successful commissioning of the new micromalt unit installed in the Olds College teaching brewery. This achievement is a testament to the collaborative effort between WCI, Olds College brewery staff, and industry groups. The unit will soon be fully operational, thanks to the expertise of an engineer from Curio Custom Lab Products flown in from Europe to perform the commissioning and to train members of our team, alongside college brewery staff.



This development is a significant step forward for our quality program. The new micromalt unit brings unparalleled capabilities to our operations. We are now the sole breeding program in Canada using the Curio malting system, which offers enhanced flexibility in malt assessment and ensures proper kilning of malt samples. This unique distinction underscores our commitment to innovation and quality. Thanks to our partnership with the Olds College brewery and support from industry groups, we will be the only program in the country with access to brewing and sensory assessment within our program. These assessments will provide



invaluable insights into the malting and brewing quality of promising lines, supporting the uptake of new varieties.

We are deeply grateful to the Olds College Infrastructure & IT group for their invaluable support in setting up this equipment. We also want to give a special shoutout to Brotz Electric & Construction for their exceptional effort and expertise in meeting the unique electrical needs of this project, ensuring a timely installation. Their contributions have been instrumental in the successful commissioning of the new micromalt unit.

Further expansion of WCI's quality program is on the horizon. Lori Oatway, scientific lead of the quality program, is also establishing a wet chemistry laboratory on the Olds College campus. We extend our gratitude to the Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre for their generous donation of a key component that will facilitate the analysis of samples processed through the micromalt lab. We eagerly anticipate sharing more developments as we enhance our quality assessment processes!



Recent Activities

Seeding

Our staff have been tirelessly working to get materials in the ground for this growing season. In the month of May, approximately 40,000 plots were planted between WCI sites in Lacombe, Olds, Trochu, and Morrin, including those for Plant Breeders' Rights, Regional Variety Trials, and AgSmart demonstrations. Additionally, more than 5,000 hill plots were planted in the disease nursery located at CDC North.

Crossing Preparation

As the crossing season approaches, we meticulously screened new parent material for agronomic, resistance, and quality traits using the program's routine genetic markers. This data serves as a strategic guide for our breeders in selecting parents for efficient crosses, thereby increasing the likelihood of developing a new, winning variety. The planting of this year's crossing blocks has also been successfully completed.

Variety Update

We are delighted to announce that variety Registration has been granted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for the triticale variety T293 with the denomination AB Sunbeam, and for the barley variety TR20661 with the denomination AB Foothills. Distribution rights are held by SeedNet Inc. and Canterra Seeds, respectively, marking another significant achievement for our program.



Extension & Knowledge Transfer

In conjunction with the Lakeland College Pulse Agronomy program, a trial testing application methods and rates of elemental sulfur, a key component in soil health management, was planted in Lacombe. This trial aims to understand the effects of different application methods and rates of elemental sulfur on the performance of peas and lupins under high pH conditions of the plot land in Lacombe.

Exciting news! Our very own barley breeder, Yadeta Kabeta, was recently featured in an interview with The Western Producer. The interview highlighted the remarkable success of WCI's new forage variety, AB Maximizer. We encourage you to [read the article](#) and share in our pride! Additionally, our Triticale Breeder, Mazen Aljarrah, started the season on a high note as a guest speaker at Stamp Seeds' Hybrid Fall Rye, Winter Triticale & Winter Wheat Tour held in Enchant, AB on June 13.

Western Crop Innovations also hosted a tour in the month of May for Junior High students enrolled in a horticulture course at Living Truth Christian School. This initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to education and community engagement, providing students with a hands-on learning experience and fostering their interest in agriculture.

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