



## ARTICLE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Midge Tolerance and More

New midge tolerant wheat varieties offer peace of mind and agronomic benefits.

**JANUARY 26, 2011** – Near Biggar, Saskatchewan this summer, some farmers were faced with the decision of whether to spray for wheat midge or take a risk of some losses in yield and quality. Dale Wylie grew about 400 acres of AC® Unity VB, saving this worry and achieving top yields. “With AC® Unity VB, we’re not worrying about midge damage anymore,” says Wylie, recalling a 10 bushel per acre loss in some severely damaged fields that weren’t sprayed in 2008.

“The fact that we can get away from wheat midge problems and reduce insecticide use is always a positive,” says Wylie. “Plus, this variety has also been a top yielder compared to other varieties we’ve been growing, along with good quality, protein and slightly earlier maturity.”

For Michael Knobel who runs a mixed farming operation in Landis, just northwest of Biggar, a trial comparison of AC® Unity VB to a non-midge tolerant variety proved similar results, providing a record yield and agronomic benefits. “The yield was phenomenal – about a 10 bushel per acre yield advantage, plus it has a great disease package. We were really happy with it,” says Knobel, noting that he is planning an increase in acreage of midge tolerant wheat for next year.

“In the last three years I’ve had to spray every acre of wheat I’ve had in,” says Knobel. “If midge tolerant wheat varieties are saving you spraying costs and yielding better than other wheat varieties then you can’t go wrong by putting it in the ground.”

While this new technology is very effective, it does require proper stewardship in order to keep it viable for future generations. Farmers planting midge tolerant wheat are required to sign a Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Agreement, which limits the use of farm-saved seed to one generation past Certified seed. This limitation is critical to ensure that the refuge remains at the desired level of 10% of the plant population, as the refuge in farm-saved seed may change substantially over multiple generations. For example, under an extremely heavy midge infestation, the susceptible refuge variety could sustain up to 50% yield loss.

“The stewardship program is definitely a good thing,” says Knobel. “Especially considering this is our only other option besides spraying to combat wheat midge.”

“Midge tolerant wheat is a great technology, as long as we can maintain it,” says Wylie. “Without the refuge system, it could break down within a few years. And it’s only based on a single gene so if that is lost we could be in trouble.”

Visit [www.midgetolerantwheat.ca](http://www.midgetolerantwheat.ca) to learn more about these new varieties and how the interspersed refuge system works.

*This article has been brought to you by the Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Team, a broad industry coalition representing plant breeders, government, seed growers, seed distributors and producer groups.*

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For more information, please visit [www.midgetolerantwheat.ca](http://www.midgetolerantwheat.ca) or contact the following Co-Chairs of the Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Team:

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