

Meet a Producer – Dylan Wiebe

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It is no secret that research focused on something that affects a person specifically is the most interesting to them. As humans, we're different. We each have our own set of unique circumstances, interests and goals. Imagine you're a farmer who has an interest in research that can help you grow the most successful crop you can in the most sustainable way, and the best part is you get to conduct the research first-hand, on your farm. This must sound like a great idea.

26 year-old, Dylan Wiebe was able to do just that.

Dylan wears multiple hats: one – a farmer, another – manager of a seed business. Although Dylan didn't grow up on a farm, he was always drawn to the work (and fun) that came along with a farming lifestyle. When he graduated high school, he got the opportunity to rent some land from his uncle and grandfather to start farming on his own. After graduating university with his degree in Agribusiness, Dylan and his uncle Lloyd started a seed business, LD Seeds, which they now operate near Altona, Manitoba. This past year Dylan was lucky enough to experience participating in research that was applicable to him as a farmer with the On-Farm Network (OFN).



Producer, Dylan Wiebe (Photo: Dylan Wiebe)

“As farmers, we are always looking for new ways to improve our practices and increase our bottom line. There is no better place to perform research than on your own farm, with your own equipment and in your own environment,” said Dylan, who recommends participating in the OFN to any farmer who is interested.

The OFN is built around on-farm research related to pulse, soybean, wheat and corn crops. The program is directed by the Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers (MPSG), and funded by MPSG, the Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association (MWBGA) and Manitoba Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and participating in the OFN is a perk of membership with the organizations. The research that is done is conducted on real, working farms and farmers, in collaboration with research specialists, get to be involved in the process.

Farmer’s, especially young farmers like Dylan, are constantly learning. Through participating in the OFN, farmers are easily able to benefit from the numerous learning opportunities that they are exposed to. On Dylan’s farm, a trial using Manipulator, a plant growth regulator (PGR), was conducted in a field of AAC Brandon wheat.



On-Farm wheat trial (Photo: MPSG)

“I was already interested in performing a PGR trial on spring wheat prior to receiving the email from the MWBGA requesting on farm research participants. From there, it was an easy decision to utilize the on-farm research team. From planning to harvesting the trials, they made the process simple and easy, even during the busy harvest season,” says Dylan.

PGRs are natural or synthetic chemicals that are applied to a seed or plant to beneficially modify plant growth and development by altering the plant's hormonal activity. A PGR can be used for several different reasons depending on what the farmer's objective is, possibilities range from stunting plant growth to increasing insect or disease resistance. Which can mean less chemicals for the crop, protection of grain quality and less stress for the farmer. The development of products like this for farmers to utilize has been instrumental for crop success in Canadian agriculture. There's no question that having the ability to see how tools, like PGRs, play out on your own crop is valuable.

"I was surprised at the results we had with Manipulator considering we had very little to no lodging in our wheat. We applied Manipulator at the optimal stage (GS31), made a separate pass to apply it and still managed to break even on our costs," adds Dylan, "on average, the Manipulator trials had a 3.3 bushel per acre increase with 0.4% less protein. The height of the plant was shortened by 4 inches and we could drive the combine 0.5 MPH faster than the check strips due to less straw."



Drone photo of wheat trial (Photo: Dylan Wiebe)

To some, the work that goes into research can seem daunting however, no matter what kind of research is being done, it's purpose is simple: test theories and gain accurate, reliable data to learn from and make better future decisions. Data gathered from the on-farm trials is not only beneficial to researchers, but also to farmers.

“Having local and accurate data will help me plan and make decisions on my farm in future years,” Dylan says, describing his biggest takeaway from participating in the program.

Farm management is complex. Many decisions require a balance of crop characteristics with information about local factors like soil, weather and historic management. An On-Farm research project can give you data for your farm and being involved in the network can give you information about variability across other soil and weather conditions.

Currently, there are still opportunities to participate in an On-Farm research trial for 2019. If you or someone you know is interested in participating, please contact the MWBGA Research Manager, Lori-Ann Kaminski at loriann@mbwheatandbarley.ca or [204-745-6661](tel:204-745-6661). MWBGA members are encouraged to inquire.

As posted on Manitoba Wheat and Barley Growers Association Website