

Act Early to Secure Seed for 2022

The unprecedented heat and drought across western Canada this year has left farmers facing many challenges, ranging from grain yield reductions to herbicide carryover concerns. The combination of heat, drought, high commodity prices and in some areas, grasshopper damage, have led to concern over seed quality and availability for the 2022 growing season.

Grain yield is not the only factor impacted by heat and drought stress. Seed quality is also of concern as stress during the reproduction and grain fill period can lead to poor germination and vigour. If you plan on using farm saved seed, it is important to test for germination, vigour, thousand kernel weight (TKW) and seed borne disease through an accredited lab. Another consideration is that drought stress can also lead to smaller seed size. Knowing the TKW of your seed lot can help account for seed size variation when calculating seeding rates. More information on using TKW to calculate seeding rates is available [here](#).

Seed test results can be used to determine if you have adequate seed quality. While seed can be tested immediately after harvest, germination and vigour can change throughout storage. It may be beneficial for producers to re-test seed closer to spring. Due to the widespread nature of the drought, certified seed availability may be more limited than usual. Testing seed early will allow for more time to find a quality seed source of a desired variety, if needed.

Beware of brown-bag seed sellers too. Unlike brown-bag, certified seed is authorized for sale, with a portion of the sale returning to the breeding program to develop new and improved varieties. Most varieties are protected by Plant Breeder's Rights (PBR), and limit sale of seed intended for planting to authorized sellers. If a variety you are growing is protected under PBR legislation, you have obligations when you purchase, save, store, clean and use the grain you produce as seed. Under PBR protection, it is an infringement to buy farm-saved (brown bagged) seed. Not only is the seller of brown bagged seed liable for damages, but buyers are also liable (UPOV91).



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It's a good idea to do some research on other varieties that may be suited to your farm location.

Newer varieties that have recently gained popularity are likely to sell out first, so having a backup plan is crucial. Consult the provincial seed guides and compile a list of varieties that perform well in your area. The more years a variety has been tested, the greater the confidence in the performance data. Your local seed growers will also be a valuable resource, as they are likely to have firsthand experience with newer varieties and how they compare to other popular varieties in your area. It is important to consider varietal factors that are most important on your operation such as FHB tolerance, midge tolerance, standability, sprouting tolerance, etc.

Farmers should start checking in with their seed suppliers earlier rather than later. Booking early allows seed distributors to transport a variety to local retailers. Shortages may be localized, so it could take more phone calls and a further drive to secure seed.

Additional Resources:

[Canadian Seed Institute](#) - Accredited Seed Labs to get your seed tested
[Manitoba Seed Guide](#)
[Saskatchewan Seed Guide](#)
[Alberta Seed Guide](#)
[Plant Breeders' Rights](#)



Alberta
Barley



MANITOBA
CROP
ALLIANCE

