

The Making of a Cereal King



When Syngenta threw down the gauntlet to the colonies in Western Canada, asking them to engage in friendly competition to find out who would be crowned Cereal King, the farm managers rose to the challenge.

"Cereal King is a one-of-a-kind contest because we are rewarding clients for their excellent product, not just for their business," offers Curt Baldwin, territory manager, Red River Valley, Manitoba. "It's our way of saying thank you and giving them maximum return for their investment in our products. And it's fun."

The farm managers thought so too. And they were confident they had as much chance of winning the first-place prize of an all-terrain vehicle as any of their brethren in other colonies. And since growing good crops on thousands of acres means long hours of walking the fields, an all-terrain vehicle could really help out with their work. So, on the trusted recommendation of their Syngenta territory managers, they signed up. They diligently prepared their fields. They applied nutrients to fortify the soil. They carefully selected seed and applied Dividend to help them grow. Then they lovingly seeded them, not too deep, not too shallow and precisely at the right time. All summer long they tirelessly walked their fields, checking for weeds and disease. And they used Syngenta products: Horizon® or Achieve for grassy weeds and Tilt for cereal leaf diseases.

When the time was exactly right and the crops swayed heavy in the fields, they harvested them and collected the seed samples. Then they turned them over to their Syngenta territory manager. And they waited.

Twenty-seven years of grading samples taught Chris Chivilo what to look for in the 76 barley samples and 80 wheat samples he received: plumpness, bushel weight, yield, uniformity, protein, moisture, disease resistance and colour. He knew only excellent agronomic practices, quality Syngenta products and good weather could produce the outstanding standard he found in some of the samples.

The Cereal King contest achieved what Syngenta hoped it would. Three winners were crowned, Syngenta's chemicals performed well and the colonies had fun. "We wanted to open communications between Syngenta and the colonies, and amongst the colonies themselves, by encouraging positive competition," explains Kevin Kuryluk, territory manager, Western Prairie District.

Kuryluk says he knows Syngenta was successful because when Lenard Walters, barley Cereal King in Alberta, travelled from his Birch Hills Colony in Northern Alberta 1,000 km south to Lethbridge for meetings, members of a southern colony congratulated him on his win. "It's really brought the community closer together," Kuryluk says.

2005 Cereal King Results

Congratulations to our 2005 Cereal King Winners

Western Prairie District

Wheat Winners

- 1st - Hillridge Colony
- 2nd - Wintering Hills Colony
- 3rd - Acadia Colony

Barley Winners

- 1st - Birch Hills Colony
- 2nd - Bluegrass Colony
- 3rd - Hillridge Colony

Central Prairie District

Durum Winners

- 1st - Wheatland Colony
- 2nd - Tomkins Colony
- 3rd - Webb Colony

Barley Winners

- 1st - Waldeck Colony
- 2nd - Main Centre Colony
- 3rd - Rose Valley Colony

Eastern Prairie District

Wheat Winners

- 1st - Millshof Colony
- 2nd - Blumengart Colony
- 3rd - Westroc Colony

Barley Winners

- 1st - Wellwood Colony
- 2nd - Hidden Valley Colony/Lajord Colony
- 3rd - Kamsley Colony

2006 Cereal King Contest Unveiled

While we continue to celebrate the victories of the 2005 Cereal Kings, plans are underway for the 2006 version of the contest. Here are some of the details:

- Colonies can win on three crops: barley, durum (oats in Manitoba and spring wheat).
- An independent third party will judge the samples. In case of a tie, winners will be selected by the judge, based on Canadian Grain Commission standards.
- Each colony may submit up to two samples (from two separate fields) in each crop contest for a maximum of six samples.
- During the summer, Syngenta territory managers will provide grain sample kits to qualifying colonies.
- Winning colonies will be awarded based on the quality of the crop samples they submit.
- Three grand prize winners will be selected in each district, one for each crop. Second and third place winners will also receive prizes.
 - **Grand Prize** - \$3,500 in Syngenta product, a plaque, jacket, farm sign and an invitation for one colony member to attend a local colony appreciation event.
 - **2nd place** - \$2,500 in Syngenta product, a plaque and an invitation for one colony member to attend a local colony appreciation event.
 - **3rd place** - \$1,500 in Syngenta product, a plaque and an invitation for one colony member to attend a local colony appreciation event.
- Six bonus draws! For each sample submitted, colonies will be entered for the chance to win an invitation for one colony member to attend a local colony appreciation event.
- Complete contest rules will be included in your 2006 Cereal King Sample Kit. Look for yours to arrive in summer 2006.

Questions?

Please contact your local Syngenta Territory Manager or our Customer Resource Centre at **1-877-SYNGENTA (1-877-964-3682)**, e-mail us at crc@syngenta.com or visit our website at www.FarmAssist.ca



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What did it take to become a Cereal King™?
Read the stories of how three colonies rose to the challenge, carefully made their plan and were crowned King



Barley Crown Puts Incentive Into Farming



Jack Waldner sits with pride on his brand new all-terrain vehicle.

For Jack Waldner, farm manager of the Wellwood Colony in southwestern Manitoba, being crowned Cereal King provides incentive for him and the youth of the colony to keep farming.

“Recognition is a big thing because the farming has to go on,” he says. “This contest got the kids involved. They were interested in what we did and how we did it. And we have to keep the young people interested, or else Alberta’s oilfields beckon.”

The colony seeds over 9,000 acres in barley, wheat, oats, canola, corn and flax. As well, they have a 300-head cow-calf operation, 20,000 hogs and a dehulling plant.

Waldner has spent 24 years as farm manager of Wellwood Colony and has been dealing with Syngenta since the company began working in the area. “I’m a loyal customer,” he offers. “I like their products and their programs. If you want an inexpensive fungicide that works well, go with Syngenta. We’ve been using Achieve® ever since it came out because it’s the best wild oat herbicide for barley there is. And Dividend® works well for seed treatment.”

As well, Waldner has an excellent relationship with his territory manager, Mitch Reid. “When you ask him something, he has good, quick answers. If you ask him to come out, he does. He’s very conscientious about his job.”

Waldner is conscientious about his job, too. “I thought we would be good competition because we have good farm practices,” he says. “We use Syngenta products, like Tilt®, and we have a little bit of luck.” The colony also hires soil experts to provide recommendations on how to balance nutrients to improve fertility. “We’ve had pretty good success,” Waldner says.

Waldner’s winning entry was Conlon barley, which he uses as feed for the pigs. “It’s very heavy and disease resistant,” he offers.

He was encouraged to enter the competition by brethren in the colony who enter annual competitions for livestock. “If you never enter you never win. It was fun and exciting.”

The prize was incentive to enter as well. “I wanted the all-terrain vehicle to check crops, I’m getting too old to do it on foot,” he says. “And the kids are looking forward to having it too.”

Waldner laughs when he’s asked how it feels to be king. “I don’t really feel like a king,” he says. Then he reconsiders and admits, “I guess it feels kind of good.” 🏆

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Crop-walking King Wins Durum Crown

Peter Hofer says that the Wheatland Colony in southwestern Saskatchewan winning the crown of Cereal King for durum wheat proves two things: “someone actually wins contests; and Syngenta has an excellent product line.”

Hofer, field and crop manager on the colony has long known that Horizon does a good job of controlling the wild oats that can plague his crops. “There’s not a product that comes even close,” he maintains.

Hofer manages over 10,000 acres seeded to durum, spring wheat, barley, yellow peas, lentils and canola. The colony also has 70 head of dairy cows, a feedlot for 200 steers, a 330-hog operation, 11,000 chickens and ducks and turkeys for their own use.

“The colony is happy we won. It justifies our name of Wheatland Colony and it proves we are doing things right.”

“The colony is happy we won,” Hofer says. “It justifies our name of Wheatland Colony and it proves we are doing things right.” 2005 produced the colony’s best durum crop ever.

“We had good seed, good seed treatment with Dividend, timely and good chemical application with Horizon; and then it’s a matter of staying on top of it. I like to drive around every three days to see what’s going on in the fields,” offers Hofer. His winning entry was Avonlea durum. “It’s got

nice colour, close to 14 percent protein and a good weight.”

Hofer admits the main reason he entered the Cereal King contest is because he likes a challenge. “The prize appealed to me too, but I had no expectation of winning it,” he says.

“When they announced that our colony had won, I must have gone up three or four feet from the chair I was sitting on,” he recalls. “The only other time I was that excited was the day I got married 30 years ago.”

The colony will use their all-terrain vehicle “for all it’s worth,” Hofer promises. “It’s for all the people of the colony to use. But I will have free access to it whenever I need it to check the crops and let my GPS work.”

His advice for other colonies is, “do things at the right time as much as weather permits, then keep on top of things. Use the best chemicals, herbicides and seed treatments for what you are trying to achieve.”

And as far as being crowned Cereal King? “When I walk in my crops I feel that I am truly king.” 🏆



Peter Hofer, right, receives the key to his all-terrain vehicle from Territory Manager Scott Leppa.

Northern Alberta Colony Takes Barley Crown

“It feels great to be king,” says Lenard Walters, farm manager of the Birch Hills Colony of 92, approximately 80 kilometres northeast of Grande Prairie, Alberta. “It’s always been my dream to win something.”

Walters oversees 12,000 acres seeded in wheat, barley, oats, canola, peas and corn. Plus, the colony has a 600-head cow-calf operation, 280 sows, 250,000 broilers, 250 sheep, sundry ducks and geese.

The colony’s crown was awarded for its Stein barley, which was produced from a new variety of their own seed called Xena. “It was the highest yield barley we ever had,” Walters explains. “It was a nice colour, plump and heavy.”

He attributes his successful crop partially to good timing. “The barley was exceptional because we planted it early; and even though we had frost at the beginning of August, it was hard already.” Much of the barley goes to feed the 600 to 700 head of cattle in the colony’s feedlot. Because of the quality of crop this year, Walters says the stock is gaining weight better and faster than other years.

“I thought we’d have no chance against some of the colonies in southern Alberta.”

He also acknowledges Syngenta’s products for his superior barley crop. “I experimented with Tilt and it helped. We yielded two to 10 bushels an acre more than previous years.”

Walters also treated every bushel with Dividend, which he’s been using for the last three years. And he used Achieve and Horizon. “When my rep,

Kevin Kuryluk, suggested that I enter the contest, I knew I was eligible because I use so much Syngenta product,” he says.

“I didn’t dream we would win when I entered because I thought we’d have no chance against some of the colonies in southern Alberta. They have heat and irrigation,” Walters says. “But if you don’t enter, you won’t win. This is really something. I can’t believe it.”

It’s not so surprising the colony won because the folks of Birch Hills keep current with new ideas and products and follow progressive farm management practices. And Walters made sure all of the workers followed instructions throughout the season. “We went through a lot and the contest was never out of my mind,” he remembers. “This is quite an achievement for all the guys here. It means that we are doing something right on the farming end of it.” 🏆



Lenard Walters, left, receives a certificate applauding his success from Territory Manager Kevin Kuryluk.