

Your Future WHEAT Harvest Starts Now - PLAN EARLY

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Securing Another Bumper Harvest: WHY EARLY WHEAT Preparedness is Key for Zimbabwean Farmers

Zimbabwe has cemented its status as a key agricultural player, with the 2025 winter season yielding a record wheat harvest of over 640,000 metric tonnes. This significant achievement not only surpassed the country's annual national requirement of 360,000 metric tonnes but also reinforced Zimbabwe's position as one of the only two countries in Africa to attain wheat self-sufficiency. The highest ever wheat bumper harvests were a result of contributions from the Government through the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development. Initiatives such as the investment in farm mechanization, expanded irrigation infrastructure, and effective farmer support programs were real game changers that saw both small scale and commercial farmers in Zimbabwe benefiting.

As the common saying goes, fortune favours the prepared, planning early for wheat production in Zimbabwe is crucial primarily due to the need to align the crop's growth cycle with the optimal winter season to avoid the rainy season's adverse effects like increased disease pressure and reduced wheat quality at harvesting which ensures better yield and crop quality. Early planning is also vital for securing essential inputs, such as certified seeds, fertilizers, and fuel, in a timely manner, which helps manage resource availability and costs effectively before the peak demand period. Finally, it allows for proper land preparation and access to necessary financing or government support schemes, like the Presidential Wheat Programme, well in advance of planting, optimizing the chances for a successful harvest.

To ensure this success is repeated, the crucial work of the new season must begin NOW. The success of the next wheat season hinges on timely action and the right choice of seed. As the winter season approaches, Seed Co urges farmers to finalize their preparations to ensure optimal planting and a high-yielding harvest. Choosing the appropriate variety is the first, and most critical, steps

Seed Co offers a range of high-performance wheat varieties bred for the Zimbabwean environment. Understanding the key traits of each can help you tailor your selection to your farm's unique conditions.

Variety	Key Traits
SC Nduna	A high-yielding variety with potential of up to 10 tonnes per hectare. Medium to late maturing, offering stability with late plantings. Adapted for soils with medium to high clay content. Offers moderate tolerance to Leaf Rust and Powdery Mildew. Known for good milling and baking qualities, with a grain protein content typically at or above 12%.
SC Select	A very high-yielding variety that can achieve up to 10.5 tonnes per hectare. Widely adapted, yielding high across all agro-ecological zones. Medium maturing, reaching physiological maturity in 135 to 140 days. Resistant to current Leaf Rust pathotypes. Excellent milling and baking qualities, with protein content at or above 12.7%.
SC Serena	Another high-yielding variety, with a potential of up to 11 tonnes per hectare. High-yielding across all agro-ecological zones, especially suitable for middle and lowveld areas. Late maturing, typically taking 145 to 150 days to reach maturity. Resistant to current Leaf Rust pathotypes. Characterized by moderate plant height, aiding in good lodging resistance.
SC W9101	A high yielding variety with a Yield potential of 11t variety, good protein content, good rust resistance, medium to late maturity. Adapted for all agro zones.

Look Ahead: The NEW Blockbuster Variety SC W9104

In line with continuous improvement hinged on an experience of over 85 years, Seed Co is introducing a new wheat flagship variety, SC W9104 with a yield potential of above 10.5t/ha and a protein content of above 13.5%. This blockbuster variety was bred to mitigate the effects of new diseases such as stripe rust (yellow rust/ stripe rust, now prevalent in Zimbabwe), bring higher adaptability to environmental vagaries like warmer winters and especially to meet new consumer preferences, including superior white flour colour as well as enhanced yield potential and resilience. This variety is now available on the market and farmers are encouraged to embrace it in their cropping programs for the 2026 farming season.

The Importance of Early Preparedness

While Seed Co varieties are bred for resilience, early preparedness is non-negotiable for maximizing yields.

- **Variety Selection:** Secure your seed early. Delays can push planting outside the optimal window, leading to reduced yields and increased susceptibility to disease.
- **Soil Testing and Fertilizer:** A good agronomy programme starts with soil analysis to enable custom made fertilizer recommendations. Farmers are encouraged to apply soil conditioners that include lime at-least 2 months before planting for effective results. Farmers are urged to purchase fertilizers early to avoid planting delays.
- **Procurement of Agrochemicals and other inputs:** Consulting technical experts early enables farmers to get custom made recommendations.
- **Irrigation Systems Check:** For winter wheat, a functional and efficient irrigation system is paramount. Test pumps, pipes, and sprinklers now to avoid breakdowns when the season is underway.
- **Machinery servicing, repairs and hiring:** Timely machinery servicing and repairs enables seamless operations when planting starts as it reduces breakdowns that may result in planting delays. Hiring of equipment ahead of the season also reduces last minute disappointments and inconveniences
- **WATER CAPACITY ASSESSMENT:** Wheat requires between 450mm to 600mm (4.5 to 6 Mega litres of water) per hectare to complete its growth cycle.

By acting decisively now, Zimbabwean farmers can set the foundation for another successful, profitable wheat season and continue to drive national food security.

