

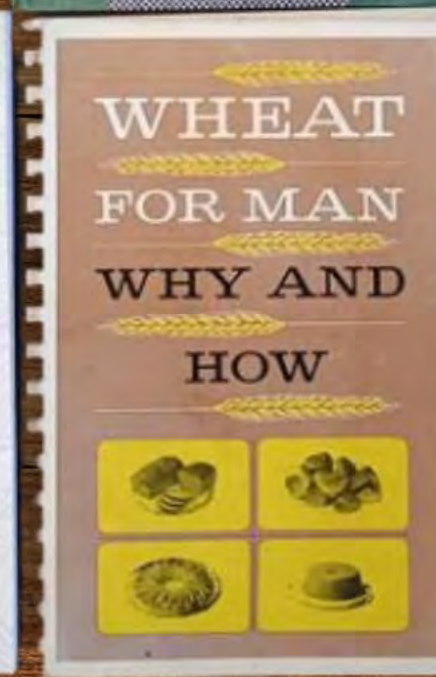
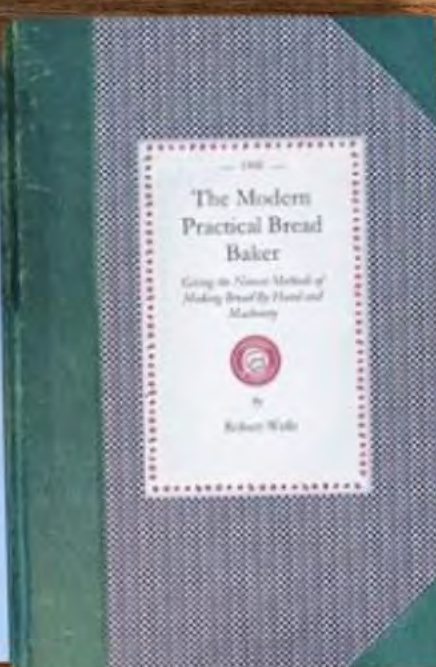
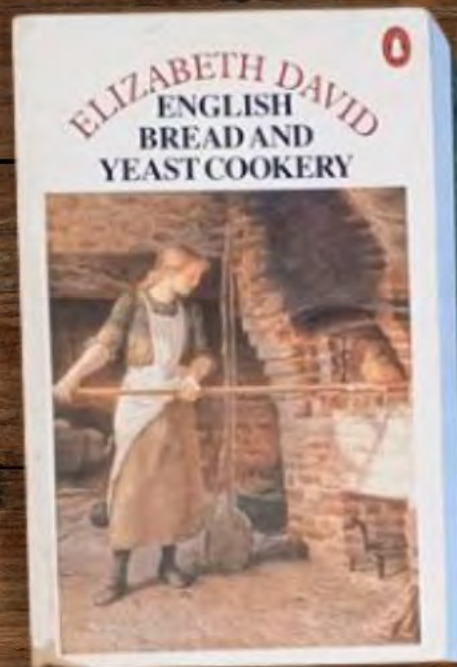


# Canada's Wheat Story

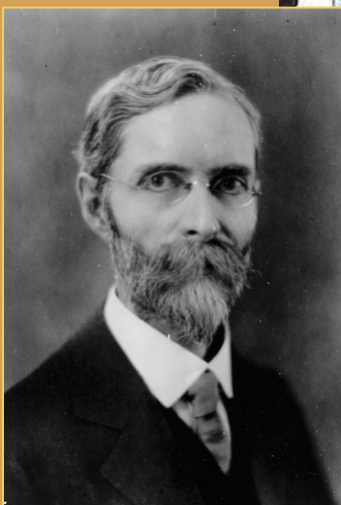
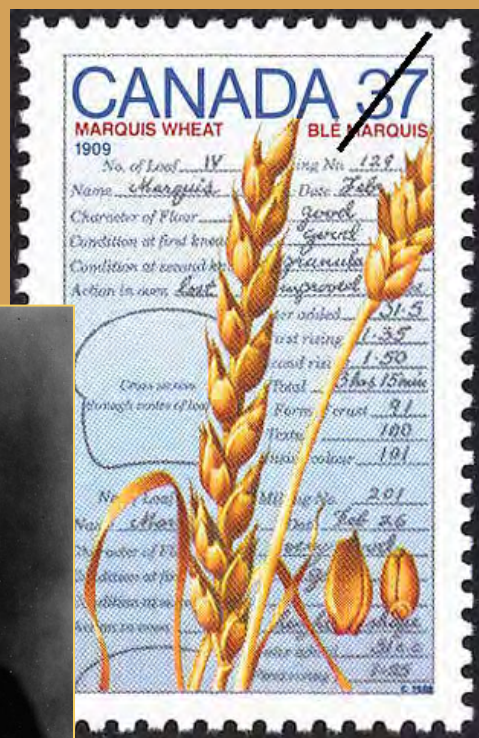
**Matilda van Aggelen**  
Market & Trade Specialist





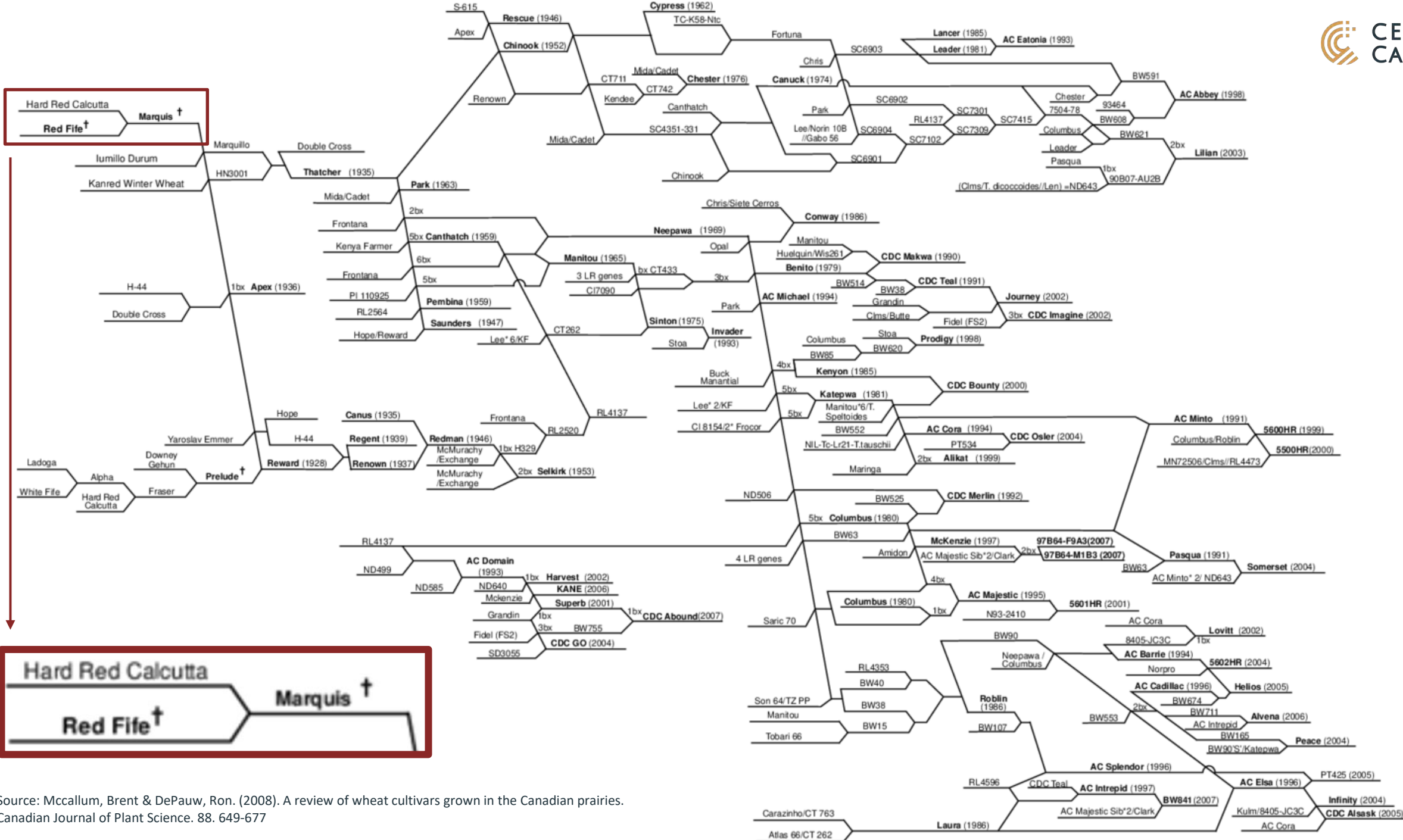






# Short History of Prairie Wheat

## Red Fife Marquis



Source: McCallum, Brent & DePauw, Ron. (2008). A review of wheat cultivars grown in the Canadian prairies. Canadian Journal of Plant Science. 88. 649-677



# It All Began With Red Fife

## Red Fife Wheat

**Was the Standard Spring Wheat  
Variety In Western Canada  
For Years**

The first notable variety of wheat to be introduced into Western Canada was one which had been developed more or less fortuitously, by a farmer named David Fife, of Peterborough County, Ontario, after whom the wheat came to be named. This variety, fortunately for Canada, proved to be a wheat of very high milling and baking quality as well as a good yielder. From the year of its introduction into Western Canada (about 1882) until the appearance of the world-famous Marquis, some twenty-six years later, Red Fife was the leading, and, in fact, the standard spring wheat variety of Western as well as Eastern Canada. It



The Garden of the Fife Homestead where the first plant of Red Fife Wheat was grown.



# Red Fife vs. Marquis

Ontario Agricultural College Review, April 1911

## Have We Reached a Standard in Wheat

R. G. THOMPSON, '11.

OF the seven species of wheat that are known, only one, *Triticum vulgare*, is really of economic importance. Of the hundreds of varieties of this species, only a score produce flour of a commercial grade, and of this score there is one variety, Red Fife, that for at least a decade has stood as a world's standard for milling wheats.

Red Fife is probably better known than any other variety of common wheat, although it is grown with success in certain parts of the world only, being grown nearer to perfection in Western Canada than in any other portion of the world. It was used by the Federal Government in systematizing the grading of the wheat of the prairie provinces and practically the same system with the same standard is retained after a test of over twenty years.

Now very little wheat other than Red Fife is grown in these Provinces, and

the highest grade No. 1 Northern, which contains at least 80 per cent. Red Fife wheat, receives a premium upon the world's markets because of the strength of its flour and because it blends readily with other varieties, raising their quality.

While Red Fife is most satisfactory to the miller and the consumer, it is not prized so highly by the grower, having for him the following disadvantages:

First. Red Fife possesses its strong breadmaking qualities only when grown in certain sections of the country. In Canada these areas lie within the prairie Provinces, where the growing season is comparatively short.

Second. Red Fife is a late maturing variety, being from five to eight days later than Preston or Stanley. (Average of Dominion Experimental Farms for five years). It is frequently frosted, resulting in severe losses to the grower.

Ontario Agricultural College Review, May 1932

## EARLIER MATURING WHEATS WERE DEVELOPED

All Canadians are familiar with the story of the development of Marquis wheat.—how the late Dr. William Saunders, Director of the Dominion Experimental Farms, saw the urgent need of an early wheat for the west. Early wheats were secured from Russia and India, and crosses made at different experimental farms in the west by Dr. W. Saunders and his sons.

Dr. Charles Saunders, when working at Ottawa on these crosses, selected a plant from the progeny of a cross between Red Fife and Hard Red Calcutta, from India, which combined the early character of Calcutta with the yield and strength of Fife.

The new creation was christened Marquis. Its early maturing character—6 to 10 days earlier than Fife—ensured the wheat crop from frost hazard over the major portion of the spring wheat belt, and it rapidly replaced Fife in Canada and the northern States where some 5-600,000,000 bushels of it are now grown annually. The wealth and welfare which Marquis wheat has brought to Canada and the U.S.A., both west and east, would be difficult to estimate.



# “Manitoba” Wheat Feeding the World



# Largest Markets for Canadian Cereals

A large portion of the grain produced in Canada is exported.

Durum	Non-Durum
91%	69%
51+	78+
Countries	Countries



The Canadian milling industry remains the largest buyer of Canadian wheat. Between 2019 and 2023, Canadian millers processed 3.2 million tonnes of wheat per year on average.



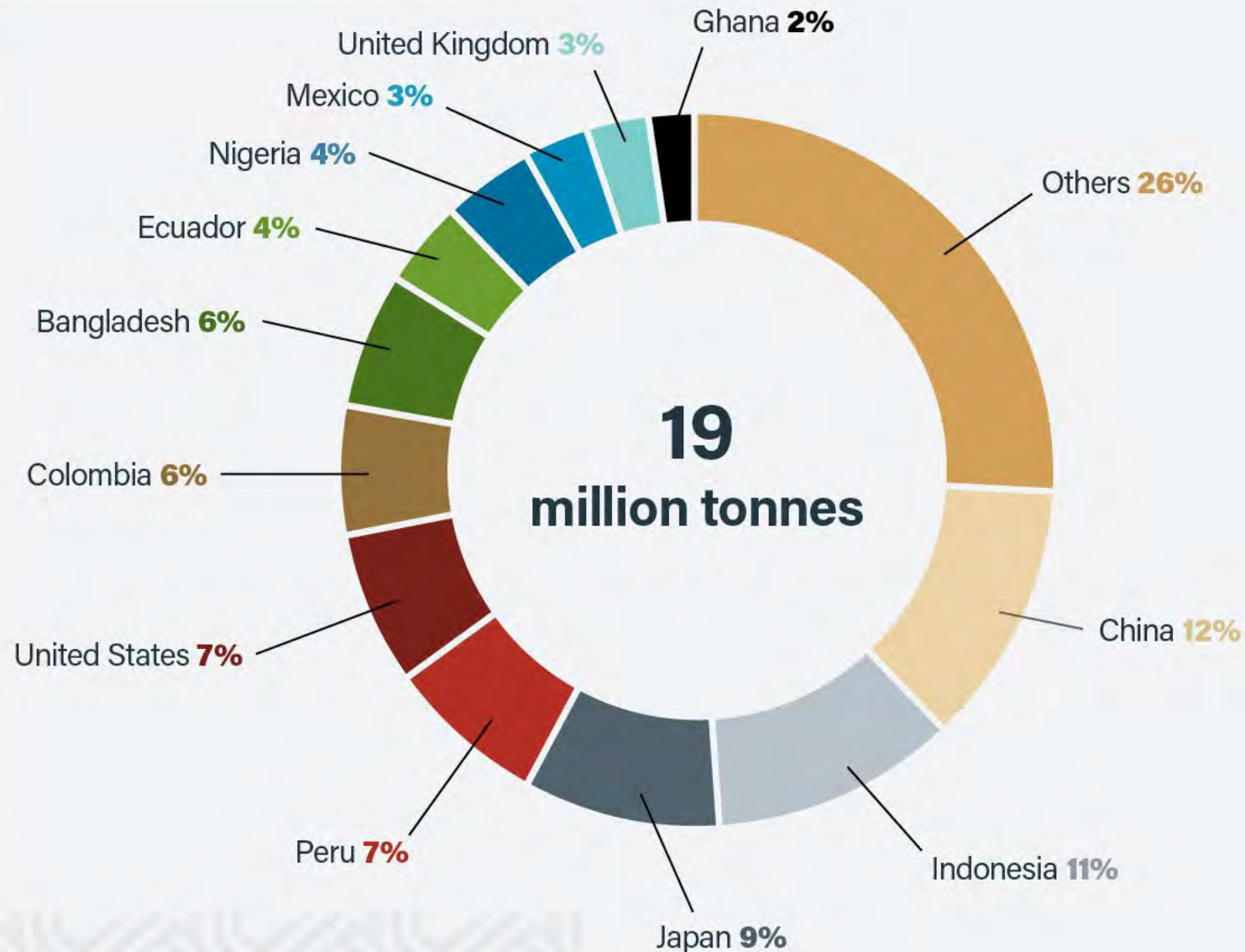
# Canadian Wheat Exports

This chart shows the annual export shares for Canadian non-wheat from 2020 to 2024.

Canada averaged approximately 19 million tonnes of non-durum wheat exports over this period.

The versatility of Canadian wheat and need for high quality drives demand across diverse markets.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2025







## Keeping Canadian Cereals Competitive

Testing wheat from top exporting markets and comparing it to Canadian Wheat quality and functionality.



100% RUSSIAN



100% CWRS



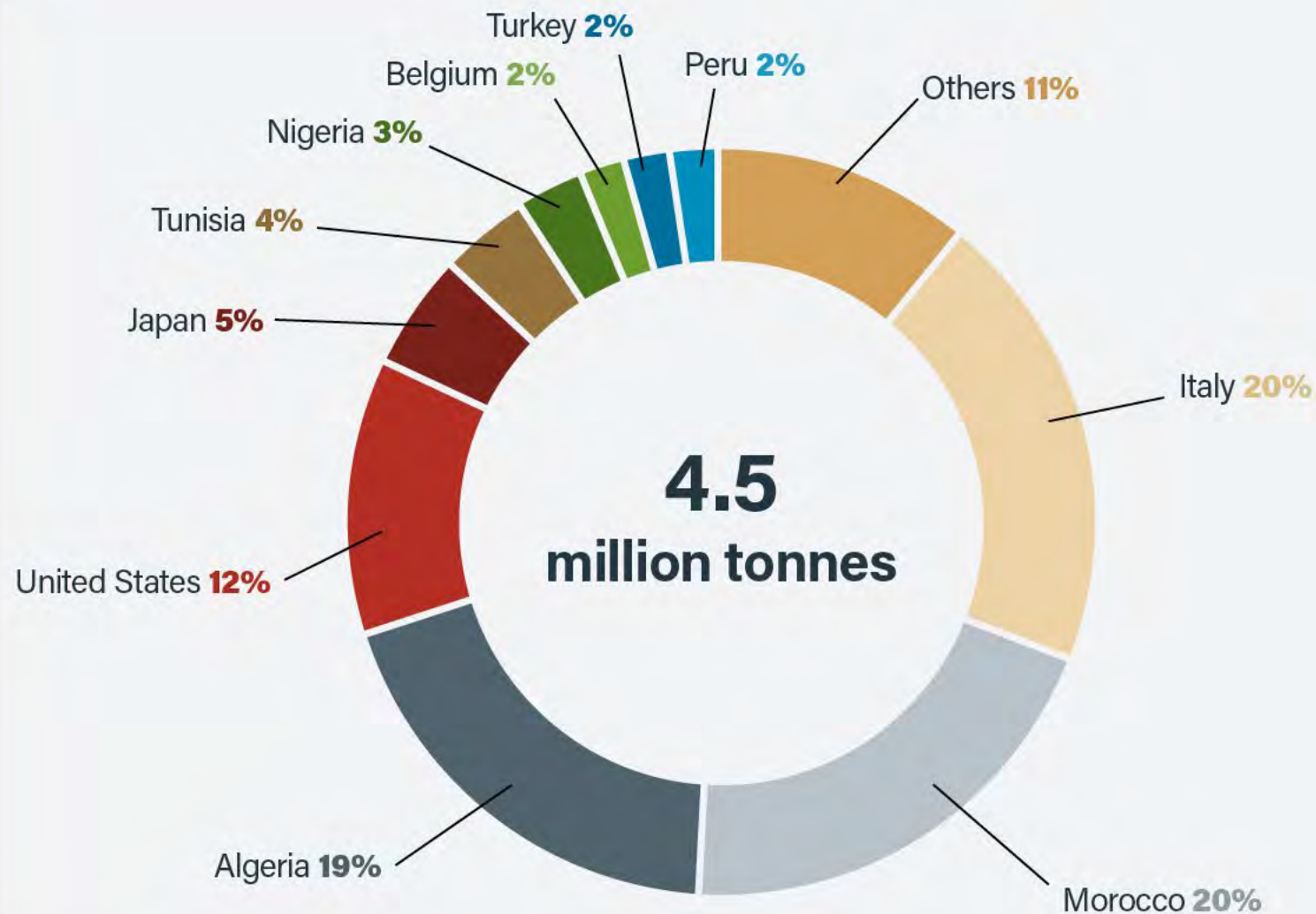


## Canadian Durum Exports

This chart shows the annual export shares for Canadian durum wheat from 2020 to 2024.

Canada averaged approximately 4.5 million tonnes of durum wheat exports over this period making Canada the largest durum exporter in the world.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2025





# Grain Farming in Canada





# Wheat Production Areas



COMMON WHEAT



DURUM WHEAT



AB



SK



MB



Other





## Wheat Yield

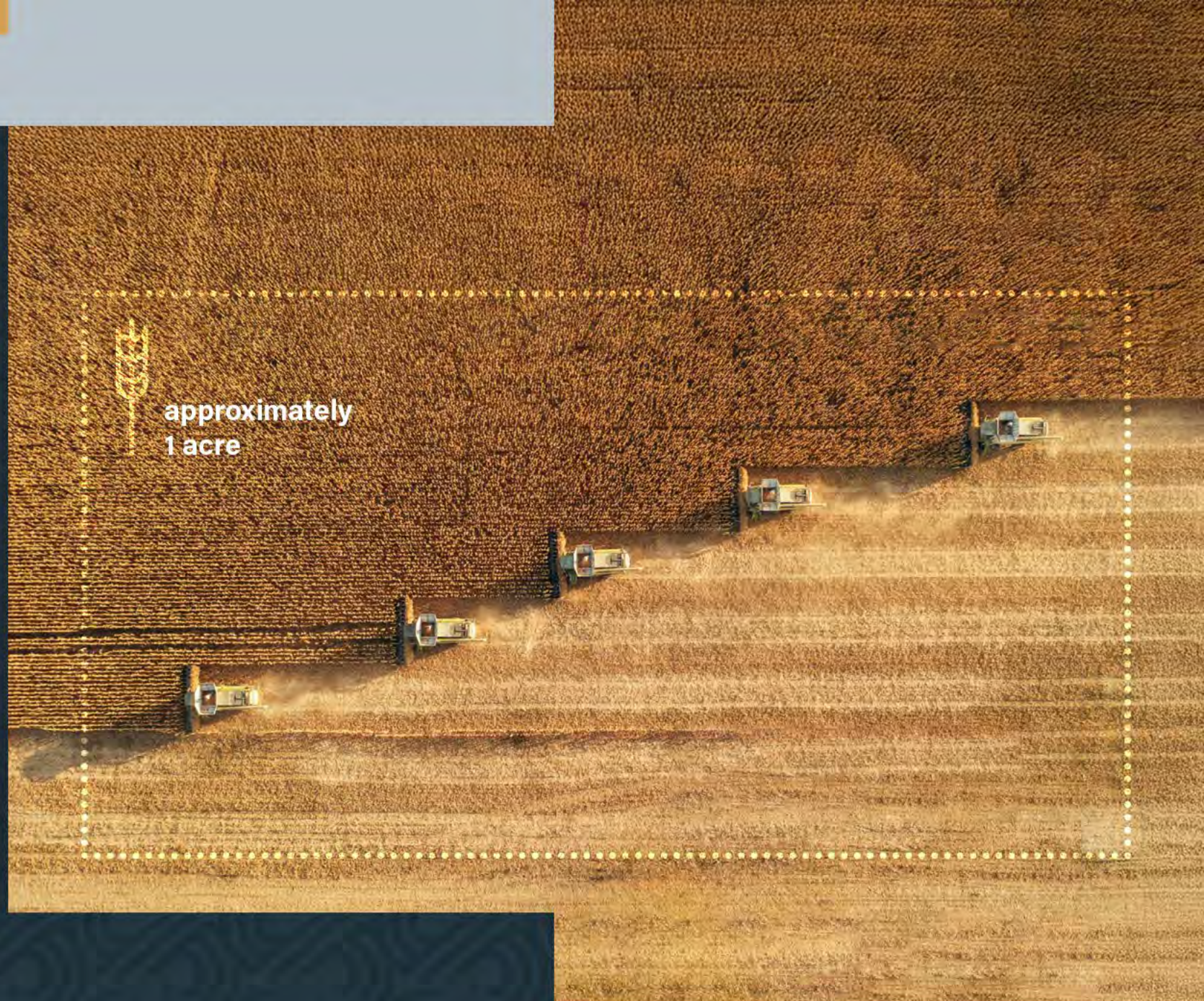


acre of CWRs

**YIELDS**



loaves of bread







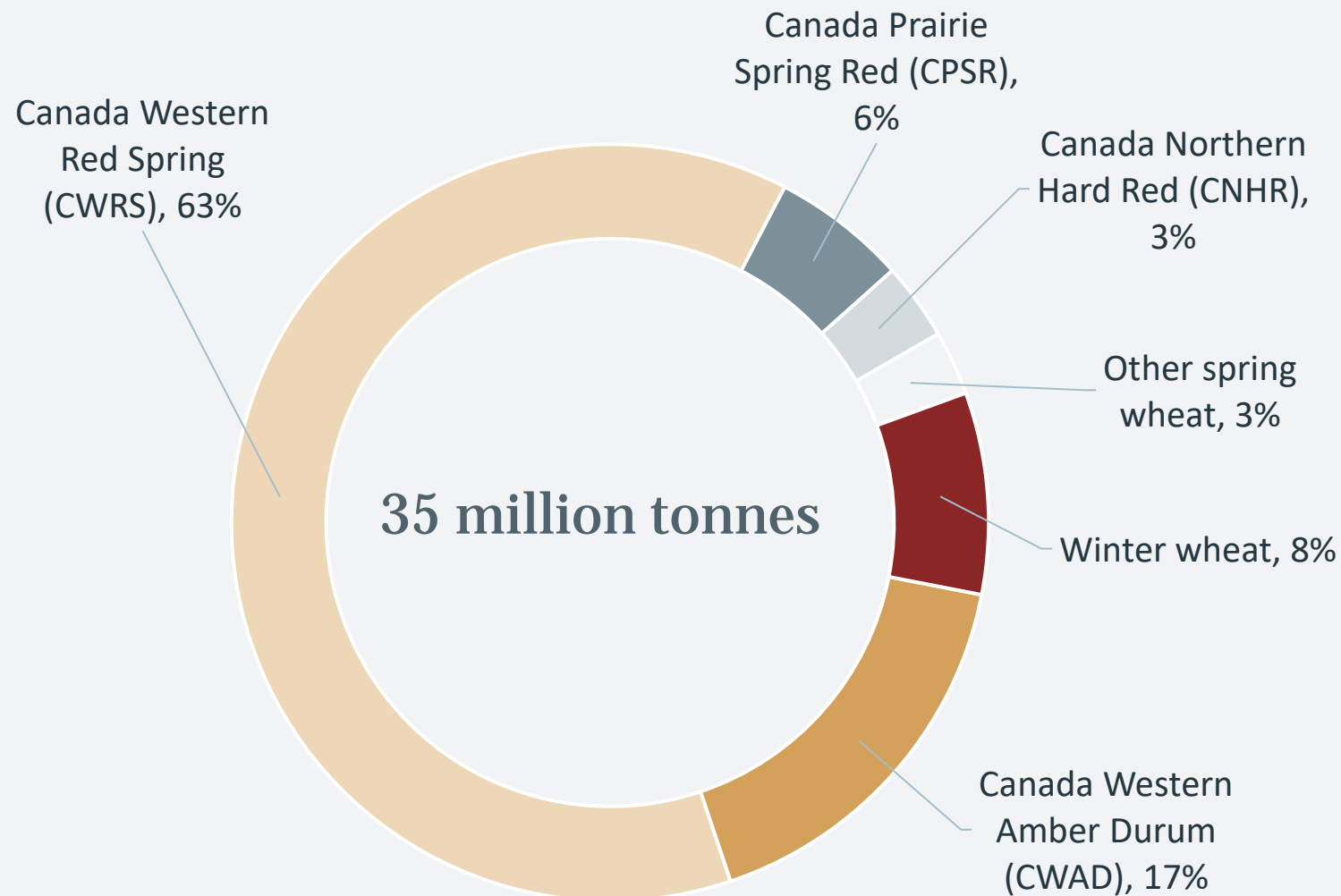
# Canadian Wheat

- 10 Wheat Classes in the West
- 7 Wheat Classes in the East
- Many varieties for growers to choose
- Each class with different specifications for milling and end products



# Share of Total Wheat Production, by class, 2024

This chart shows the distribution of wheat production by class in the latest growing season. CWRS remains the top class produced, followed by CWAD and winter wheat varieties.



Source: Statistics Canada, December 2024





CEREALS  
CANADA

[cerealscanada.ca](http://cerealscanada.ca)