

Exporter Profile: Wilbur-Ellis of Canada

Established in 1921, Wilbur-Ellis is an international marketer and distributor of agricultural products, animal feed and specialty chemicals and ingredients. One of the many facets of the business is the forage export business and Wilbur-Ellis has been exporting forages in Canada since 1991.

“We began with a facility in Lethbridge and expanded to a second facility in Cremona in 2006,” says Andrew Jungwirth, Wilbur-Ellis’ forage sales manager. “Today, we supply high quality forage to customers globally. Our business model is relationship focused with attention to detail on service and consistent quality.”

Products

Wilbur-Ellis primarily exports compressed Timothy hay to the Asian dairy market as a convenient and effective fibre source. Its main markets are the mature market of Japan, Korea and Taiwan, but the company is also gaining momentum in the China dairy market.

Partnering with Wilbur-Ellis

Wilbur-Ellis is a heavily diversified organization with a long track record and is financially stable.

“Producers interested in partnering with Wilbur-Ellis can rest assured and have peace of mind in our dealings as we have a mandate to always do what we say we will do,” says Jungwirth. “We are committed to the industry with sales personnel in our major markets and feel we have marketing strength based on this.”

Wilbur-Ellis is also able to keep a keen eye on up-to-date pricing and market situations on alfalfa and other grass hay by utilizing and leveraging its Pacific South West facility in El Centro, Calif. where it markets sudan grass, alfalfa, kleingrass, bermuda grass, all in cubes and pellets.

Trends

Jungwirth says protein feed continues to be demanded globally with increasing demands for milk, meat and cheese.

“With that, there continues to be increasing demand for alfalfa from the Middle East and China especially,” he says. “Canadian timothy demand and price remains stable in traditional markets with an educational process underway on establishing the value of timothy hay in a dairy ration for new emerging market customers.”

There is also access to niche pet food and horse markets available as well if quality is right.

Opportunities

Jungwirth believes there are many opportunities for forage producers, and Wilbur-Ellis is always interested in opportunities regarding high quality forage in large square and small squares formats.

Tips for Producers

Producers should let Wilbur-Ellis know if they are interested in producing forage for export. Wilbur-Ellis is mostly focused on timothy, alfalfa and mixed hay. It may be able to lend some insight on seed establishment, popular seed varieties, seed rates and moisture guidelines or answer any other questions regarding harvesting timothy, alfalfa and mixed hay.

“We are certainly always looking for partners to create long-term lasting relationships that consistently produce win-win scenarios for all parties,” says Jungwirth. “We are passionate about forage and we are honoured to be a part of this industry in Canada.”