Growing quality wheat as a part of his diversified farm operation, Roy Motter is able to manage water as efficiently as possible. His 2,500 acre farm in California’s Imperial Valley may seem small compared to wheat farms around the nation, but Spruce Farms LLC, where Roy is managing partner, supports three families. Roy farms Desert Durum® wheat, lettuce, cabbage, onions, sugar beets, sugar cane, alfalfa seed and hay, Sudan grass, melons and tomatoes. Wheat is a vital crop to the operation, as it provides diversification. By rotating growing wheat and lettuce Roy conserves important soil nutrients, reduces his need for pesticides and helps the farm preserve precious water resources.
85%

The Imperial Valley supports 85% of the nation’s lettuce production in the winter months of the year. The lack of rainfall in this arid climate requires farmers to use water as efficiently as possible. Roy uses wheat as a rotational crop to let the soil rest in between vegetable crops and control weeds and disease. Growing wheat with lettuce reduces water use on his farm by 24 to 56%.

“...We can’t grow our money crops – lettuce, onions, and sugar beets year after year. You have to have a rotation, and wheat is a good rotational crop for us. It lets us control weeds and diseases that affect the other crops and gives the ground a chance to rest.”

1. Desert Durum® Wheat is planted in a rotation with produce crops such as lettuce.

2. Rotation practices reduce water use, pests and disease pressure, while also improving soil health.

3. By rotating wheat and lettuce, Roy conserves important soil nutrients, reduces his need for pesticides and helps the farm preserve precious water resources.

U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) is the industry’s market development organization working in more than 100 countries. Its activities are made possible by producer checkoff dollars managed by 19 state wheat commissions and through cost-share funding provided by USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service.