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**Role of Wheat in Diversified Cropping Systems in Dryland Agriculture of
Central Asia**

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
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Abstract: Wheat is major crop in dryland agriculture of Central Asia. In most cases both spring wheat and winter wheat are grown in rotation with summer fallow. Studies were conducted in order to identify alternative crops which possibly could replace part of summer fallow and part of wheat area. Summer fallow was found inefficient practice for soil moisture accumulation in semiarid steppes of northern and southern Kazakhstan as well as in Kyrgyzstan. Many alternative crops were identified in all zones of dryland farming providing better incomes to farmers than wheat. Most important are food legumes as field pea, chickpea, lentil, oilseeds as safflower and mustard, small grains as buckwheat and millet. Food legumes and alfalfa are also very important for sustainability of production systems.

Key Words: Dryland, crop rotation, crop diversification, summer fallow

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