

Driving tour includes barley fields

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BOWDEN, Alta. - A central Alberta farmer has created a driving tour even fathers will enjoy.

In between the corn mazes, petting zoos and craft shops are Sundre barley fields, complete with details of chemical sprayed and fertilizer used.

Bob Mastin came up with the idea of a barley driving tour after calls from farmers bragging about their Sundre barley fields.

Mastin, a pedigreed seed grower, is the first small seed grower in Western Canada to acquire exclusive distribution rights for the new grain variety. He created the Sundre Barley Fields Driving Tour through central Alberta.

"A lot of farmers told me they won't go to a corn maze, but they will stop and look at a barley field," said Mastin of Sundre, Alta.

At each of the 20 fields on the 111 kilometre tour are field signs, a map about the tour and an agronomic history of the field so farmers who stop to look know the amount of fertilizer used. Mastin has also noted that some fields have volunteer wheat poking through the field or a few too many wild oats.

Mastin said the fields were chosen for the tour by their vicinity to other points of interest like the corn maze or berry farms, so an entire family can take it in. The tour packages have six pages of points of interest information.

"Most people are hungry to see something in a new area," said Mastin.