N.D. lentil acres grow

Ray, N.D., company chooses alternative crops

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RAY, N.D. — Business has been booming since the Continental Grain Co. stopped handling small grains two years ago to focus on lentils and other alternative crops.

Manager Joe Bloms says more North Dakota farmers are turning to lentils because the financial returns are so good. Lentils fetch about 14 cents a pound. An average yield of 1,300 pounds per acre means a return of $180 per acre for the producer.

"With spring wheat, you would need to average 35 bushels an acre at $6 a bushel to get that kind of return," Bloms says. "We rarely see 30 bushel-per-acre wheat around here."

Benefits of lentils

Lentils are also good for the soil, says Bloms, Continental’s manager since 1979.

“They put nitrogen back into the soil, they don’t require a lot of moist-