

Crop Management

New wheats shine in trials

By T.J. BURNHAM

COLOROADO State University's new Byrd wheat variety outperformed all competitors in the 2012 dryland variety performance trials last year, posting similar first-place postings in the last two and three years.

That's a serious plus for the state's pro-

ducers, says Jerry Johnson, CSU Extension crop production specialist.

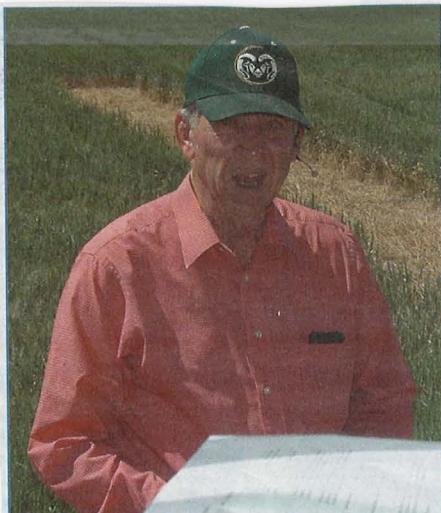
"This is our biggest new wheat," he says of the 2011 CSU release. "The numbers tell the story."

In a trial last year of more than 40 wheats, Byrd won top honors with 54.9 bushels per acre, 114% of the trial average.

Just in case that may be called a fluke,

Byrd now has the top honors in two years of testing of more than 20 selections, showing a 55.3-bushel yield (113% of the trial average).

Still not convinced? Byrd is also the winner in the three-year trials, says Johnson, with even stronger numbers (59.3 bushels and 112% of the average of about 20 co-varieties).



FIELD LESSONS: Jerry Johnson, a Colorado State University Extension agent, discusses the success of CSU varieties at a field day.

Just in case that doesn't impress growers, CSU is also churning out some surprise cultivars for them. Take note that the second-biggest winner, Antero, is also a newer 2012 release, placing second in both the one- and two-year trials. (It hasn't been around long enough for the third-year test.)

With 54.6 bushels (113%) in the 2012 tests, and 54.7 bushels (112%) in the two-year trials, Antero is catching growers' eyes as well, says Johnson.

Star on all stages

"Antero does well in yield across all environments," Johnson says of the trials conducted throughout Colorado.

Antero performed well above average at Haxtun and Rocky Ford test sites and in the limited irrigation trial at Fort Collins, he notes.

"Antero has been evaluated in comprehensive milling and baking quality tests in the CSU Wheat Quality Laboratory with an 'Excellent-Good' ranking." In those same tests, Byrd scored "Excellent-Excellent" in the double ranking, which shows milling rating in the first and baking in the second rating.

While variety is the key ingredient in success of a wheat field, much more enters into the equation, says Johnson, including proper calibration of the seed drill.

"We feel the best way to go about this is to use seeds rather than pounds per acre," he says. "If seed size is large, then growers may not be planting enough per acre. Using seeds per acre corrects that error." At the same time, higher-than-desirable rates may be planted if seed sizes are too small.

"Farmers probably don't plant light enough in late August or early September, and they probably don't plant heavy enough when they move into October," he says.

While a complex table is available for growers to use by contacting Johnson, he has some rules for producers to use in the field to make the practice easier.

"A farmer planting 35 pounds per acre could be planting 350,000 seeds or 630,000 seeds an acre," he says.

When planting by seed count, the grower not only saves seed money, but also knows how many seeds were planted in a linear foot of row, so stand counts can be taken after emergence to determine what percent of planted seed actually emerges, Johnson says.

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