

Best Practices Sustain Wheat Yield Gains

Public Value Statement

Science-based wheat management practices improve productivity and profitability for farmers while reducing the risk of excessive input use that may move to off-farm environments.

The Situation

Wheat production is the primary economic driver in many counties of western North Dakota. Wheat yields have been increasing and new varieties and modern production practices are needed to sustain these productivity increases. Using “best practices” enable farmers to improve their yields and profitability while minimizing the use of excessive inputs, thus reducing their risk of movement to off-farm environments.

Extension Response

Each year NDSU Extension organizes meetings where recent results from research are presented are presented to growers and consultants in several locations in the state. These daylong meetings, called the Best of the Best in Wheat Research and Marketing, provide information on key production practices, particularly those for which new information is available. Oral presentations and hands-on demonstrations are used to deliver the information that emphasizes integrated approaches that optimize input use and on-farm profitability.

Impacts

Based on a post-meeting survey of those attending the Best of the Best meeting in Minot in 2018, 75% indicated that they learned something new and useful and 20% indicated that they would apply what they learned in their farming operation. New soil fertility recommendations, best disease control methods and factors to consider when marketing wheat were a few of the topics identified by growers where new information would impact decisions on how they would manage and market their wheat crop in the coming season.

Feedback

The following are some comments gleaned from the post-meeting survey that describe how the information presented will impact how they will manage and market the wheat crop:

- *I will look at the new recommendation for potassium. We may be able to save \$10-15 an acre in fertilizer costs in some areas*
- *By applying fungicide in a timely manner when needed for scab control, I can reduce my applications from twice to only once*
- *New understanding about leaf and stripe rusts will help me better manage them*
- *Learning where to find free images of my fields will save me money as I incorporate precision agriculture techniques into my operation*
- *I plan to order temperature sensors so that I can detect inversions and so I can better manage off-target movement of herbicides*

When asked to put a dollar value on the information that they had learned from the meeting, the responses varied from \$5 to \$15 an acre.

Primary Contact

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Collaborators

Most state and area specialists made presentations at the Best of the Best meetings in 2018.

Non-Extension Collaborators

The Best of the Best meetings are sponsored by the North Dakota Wheat Commission and the North Dakota Grain Growers.

Resource Links

Many of the PowerPoint presentations given at the Best of the Best meetings can be viewed at:
<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallgrains>