

**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
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New Wheat Varieties

As area farmers complete harvest, their focus will likely turn to marketing the 2012 crop and plans for 2013. Selecting crops and varieties along with determining fertilizer and machinery needs will require major decisions sometime this winter.

The primary crop grown in the counties of northwest North Dakota is durum. I suspect it will remain number one but recent requests for information about varieties leads me to believe there will be more acres planted of spring wheat next year.

In recent years the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station has released several new varieties of hard spring wheat. These include Velva (2012), Prosper (2011), Barlow (2009), Faller (2007), Howard (2006), and Glenn (2005).

Velva has a broad adaptation to the spring wheat region but fits better in Central and Western North Dakota environments. It has excelled in performance, particularly where Reeder is grown. It has high grain yield – higher than most varieties adapted to the Central and Western regions including Glenn, the most dominant variety of the region.

Velva is a semi-dwarf with medium late maturity, similar to Reeder and Faller. Straw strength, test weight, and protein are similar to Reeder. However, its excellent leaf disease package is better than Reeder.

Velva is resistant or medium resistant to leaf and stem rusts; resistant to Septorias; resistant to races two and three of tan spot and medium susceptible to scab compared to susceptible checks.

Durum growers will be hearing about the new NDSU release named Carpio. It has shown excellent yield potential in NDSU yield trials as well as very good yield stability across multiple

environments. Data from these trials shows Carpio provides yield advantages over Divide and Lebstock. It has a larger kernel size than Mountrail.

Carpio has been given an overall quality rating of "Excellent" by the NDSU Cereal Chemists. It has very good protein content.

The scab tolerance of Carpio is close to that of Divide which is slightly better than Grenora, Albabo, Lebstock, Mountrail, and Pierce.

While its grain yields are very competitive to other popular varieties at most test sites across the state I am a bit concerned about its performance at Williston during the 2007-11 yield trials.

Windbreak Construction Guidelines

Most cattle producers of this area understand the importance of protecting their cows from the cold winter winds. I remember Dexter Johnson, former NDSU Agricultural Engineer, telling us that a 20 mile per hour wind is considered to be equivalent to an extra 30 degrees of cold.

I envy those cattlemen who have established tree windbreaks near their cattle wintering areas. For those of us who have not been able to do this, we must utilize other forms of windbreak material. Most of us utilize high fences made of wood or metal sheets. Another option is large bales stacked outside of the feedlot perimeter.

Whatever form the windbreak is made of we must remember that it does not stop the wind; it simply deflects it. Consequently, the windbreak directs the wind off to someplace else. When wind passes over a vertical barrier, it will tend to drop or swirl downward on the leeward side. The amount of swirl and how close to the fence it drops depends a large extent on how solid, dense, porous, and open the barrier is.

Research has shown that the most effective windbreak is one that is 75 to 80 percent solid and 20-25 percent open. This design allows some air to leak through preventing some of the down-drafting and swirling which occurs by a solid board fence.

In general, wind velocities are reduced 5 to 10 barrier heights away on the windward side and 10-30 heights away on the leeward side of the windbreak. However, the wind velocity reduction beyond 20 heights is minor.

I hesitated writing about this basic concept of protecting cattle during our cold winter months but hope it will serve as a reminder to act now. I am sure most minds are focused on completing fall harvest, transporting hay to the feedyard, etc. instead of -20 degree winter temperatures.