

News Column
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WHEAT VARIETIES

When my family goes out to lunch on Sunday after church, we like to keep things pretty simple. There are four places that we frequent, and everybody knows that we only shop from the bargain corner of the menu. I try to feed six of us for under \$25.

At the cheapest place, Taco Bell, I can feed the family for just under \$18. The best deal though is the one that costs us about \$26. We spend a little more, but we take home enough for the kids to have leftovers for supper. I'd eat those leftovers too if not for two kids with hollow legs having Chinese food for both an afternoon snack and their Sunday evening meal.

I like simple. I appreciate the same old stuff week after week because everyone can make a decision and we don't hold up the line. The cheap section on the Taco Bell menu offers just four choices. Since we've been choosing from the same old stuff week after week, and year after year, we all know what we want.

For several years, choosing wheat varieties to plant in Riley county was even easier than ordering for the McClure family at Taco Bell. I think I recommended planting Armour, Everest, and Cedar for at least four years in a row. It was easy. Just do it.

Things got a little more complicated last year, and it looks like there are more good wheat varieties coming on. This year, there might be ten varieties that are as good or better than my choices. That said, I'm still going to give you my list of favorites.

If I were putting together a blend, I would plant WB-Cedar, Everest, and WB-Grainfield.

Cedar has performed well for several years and I think it is an easy choice to keep it in the mix. It is an early maturing variety with moderate resistance to stripe rust and intermediate resistance to leaf rust. It won't perform well where pH is below 5.2, but we don't have many fields with pH that low in Riley County.

Everest stays on my list because it has been fairly consistent for several years and hasn't really let me down yet. It has better resistance to scab than most other varieties, and that has been a good trait the last two years. I like it if I'm planting behind corn because of its scab resistance, but I worry about it when planted no-till into wheat stubble because of susceptibility to tan spot. You could sure argue that it's time to find something new, but I'll keep it another year.

WB-Grainfield might be the gamble in my blend, but I think it fits in Riley County. Grainfield has been at the top of the Riley County Extension plot the last two years and has performed well in north-central and northwest Kansas. I think our environment is more like north-central Kansas than northeast Kansas and I'd plant it here even though the magical line separating the two regions is between Clay and Riley counties.

Grainfield has an excellent yield record in north-central Kansas. It is medium tall and medium to late maturing. It has good straw strength and good drought tolerance. The relative later maturity concerns me some, but Romulo Lolato, K-State Extension Wheat Specialist, tell me it is "late to head out, but finishes relatively quickly." If it gets hot and dry late in the fill period like it did in 2012, it could get dinged worse than Everest and Cedar, but it'll still beat many other good varieties.

Now, getting to the rest of the list. 1863 is on Lolato's list of favorites for northeast Kansas. I like its yield potential, but I don't like it's tendency to lodge when growing conditions

are great. I wouldn't plant it on the bottom ground, but I might put it in the blend everywhere else.

SY Wolf is a variety that might work for continuous, no-till wheat because of its resistance to tan spot. Hotrod is one that is to be used only in blends because of its less desirable baking quality. The yield potential of Hotrod is excellent though.

LCS Mint is one that might pick up speed in years to come. SY Monument also looks good. KanMark might work, and WB 4458 might be worth a try.

There are too many good choices for a guy who likes things to be simple, but it is sure a good problem to have again.

If you have questions, you can reach me at the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. Or, you can send e-mail to gmcclore@ksu.edu.

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