

News Column

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WHEAT VARIETIES

I sold wheat for \$7 per bushel on August 13, 2021. That was the cash price at Phillipsburg the minute of the sale, eight cents lower than it had been 10 minutes earlier. We paid some storage and took a little dock, but I'm still claiming the \$7 price.

I'm not a great marketer and really had no marketing plan. I only held onto it that long because I was too busy to ask the farmer who custom farms for us to send me the scale tickets,...and because I knew he was busy too.

I had checked the market a couple of weeks earlier and realized Kevin was doing me a favor by not sending me yield results. Since I didn't know how much wheat I had to sell, I couldn't sell it at a lower price – which I would have done because I thought \$6 per bushel was pretty good.

Like many farmers in Riley county, we don't grow as much wheat on our Phillips county farm as we did 10 to 15 years ago. We plant more corn and soybeans now, but we still grow some wheat in the rotation, primarily for weed control. Soybeans are still pretty risky that far west, and shattercane and johnsongrass are problems in continuous corn.

Higher wheat prices – \$7 per bushel isn't bad – may entice a few farmers back to growing wheat in this part of the state, so let's take a look at wheat varieties that might be the best options for us.

Last year I probably recommended SY Monument, Grainfield, and WestBred 4699. If

you kept seed from Monument or Grainfield, don't be afraid to plant it again. Those are still good varieties.

WestBred 4699 is a good variety too – probably my favorite right now – but it is protected as a certified seed only (CSO) variety. You will have to buy certified seed if you want to plant WB 4699.

WestBred also has 4269 that they like for our area, but it hasn't kept up with 4699 in the two years they have both been in our plots. It is also a certified seed only variety, and is a good one, but I lean toward 4699 if I am buying seed.

Other varieties to consider include Bob Dole, Rock Star, KS Ahearn, WB 4401, LCS Valiant, LCS Revere, and Zenda. Zenda hasn't blown us away the last couple of years, but it is still the variety to plant behind corn, because of its tolerance to scab.

I need to mention that WB 4401 and LCS Revere are also CSO varieties. If you want to keep seed to plant the next year, you'll need to avoid these varieties too.

Even with four of the 11 varieties I have mentioned being certified seed only varieties, you still have some great choices. Ten years ago you probably had three good choices. Now you have 10 or 15 good options.

I wouldn't necessarily avoid the CSO varieties either. Some of them are good enough to warrant the extra cost for certified seed.

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 gmcclure@ksu.edu.

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