

News Column

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WHEAT VARIETIES

My new favorite wheat variety is KS Providence. I have never planted it and I haven't even seen it in a plot, but write it down. We are predicting this will be THE wheat variety to plant,...next year.

KS Providence is a new release from K-State's breeding program that will be available to certified seed producers this fall. The rest of us – those of us who aren't certified seed producers – can't even buy it yet. However, Providence is expected to be the next greatest thing, so get it on your radar.

Providence is rated as exceptional for yield in the Wheat Varieties for Kansas book. Excellent used to be the highest rating — this one is supposed to be better than excellent. Exceptional.

Certified Providence seed will be available to farmers in the fall of 2023. This year we have to plant something else.

Westbred 4699 is still at the top of my list of varieties to plant in Riley county. I liked it the first year it was released, 2019, and I still think it is one of the best for our area. WB 4699 has excellent yield potential and the only real negative I see is that it is a Certified Seed Only variety. You can't keep back your own seed to plant; you have to buy certified seed every year.

While I list CSO status as a downside for WB 4699, that is probably the way many new varieties are going to go. We'll see in a few years if they all end up being certified seed only

varieties. For now, I think this one is good enough that you should plant it anyway, even if you do have to buy seed every year.

A couple of varieties that have been around awhile, that I would consider replacing, are WB Grainfield and SY Monument. They were released in 2012 and 2014 respectively. The genetics are getting old and you can probably find something better.

Bob Dole was released in 2017 and hasn't blown my socks off, but has been a solid performer. Rock Star is a 2019 release that is probably better than what I initially thought. I might give Rock Star a shot.

SY Wolverine was also released in 2019 and deserves consideration. Wolverine had a good year in 2022 and was also good in 2021. Wolverine is susceptible to aluminum toxicity in low pH soils, but most of our soils aren't low enough pH to be a problem in this area. It is an early maturing variety with good straw strength. I think it will work.

If you are planting wheat behind corn, where wheat scab is a concern, then Zenda is the variety to plant. Zenda doesn't like drought, so it was a bit behind the pack in our local plot this year, but it is still a good variety.

If you're looking for the newest genetics for our area, consider KS Hatchett. Hatchett is a 2020 release that performed well in our local plot. Its high tillering ability and earlier maturity make it a good choice following soybeans.

KS Ahearn is a 2021 release that should beat both SY Monument and Bob Dole by a couple of bushels per acre. It shouldn't be planted on fields below 5.5 pH, and is actually targeted to central Kansas, maybe 30 miles west of us, but it might work here too.

There you go. You have several good choices, depending on your situation.

You'll have to wait a year for Providence.

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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