

# Wyoming Crop Update



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## SPRING WHEAT PRODUCTION

Mike Killen, Farm Manager, UW Research and Extension Center – Powell, provided spring wheat variety trial information to producers at the Spring Wheat Workshop Jan. 25 (See table below). Wyoming crop variety trial information is available at <http://www.uwyo.edu/plantsciences/uwplant/key.html>. Kent McVay, MSU Cropping Systems Agronomist, Southern Agricultural Research Center at Huntley, MT provided results from Montana variety trials as well. Montana variety trial data is available at: <http://www.sarc.montana.edu/php/>).

**Table 1. 2011 Powell, WY Spring Wheat Variety Performance Evaluation Summary**

| Variety | 2011 Yield<br>bu/a | 2011 Test Wt<br>lb/bu | 2011 Protein % |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Solano  | 130.5              | 62.8                  | 11.9           |
| Volt    | 129.3              | 62.7                  | 11.9           |
| Kuntz   | 117.7              | 60                    | 12.4           |

For more complete listing of variety performance, go to the UW Variety trial website.

**Table 2. 2005-2011 Summary Powell Spring Wheat Variety Performance Evaluation**

| <b>Variety</b> | <b>Yield bu/a</b> | <b>Test Wt<br/>lb/bu</b> | <b>Protein %</b> | <b>Years tested</b> |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Volt           | 129               | 62.7                     | 11.9             | 2                   |
| Choteau        | 127               | 59.3                     | 12.2             | 7                   |
| Hank           | 119               | 58.3                     | 12.8             | 7                   |
| Reeder         | 105               | 60.7                     | 12.8             | 6                   |
| Outlook        | 105               | 59.3                     | 12.5             | 6                   |

For more complete listing of variety performance, go to the UW Variety trial website.

The primary question before the group was “How does a producer grow high protein wheat under flood or sprinkler irrigation?”

Flood irrigation tends to move nitrogen deeper into the soil profile and away from young wheat roots. Sprinkler irrigation gave better water control and allowed split-applications of nitrogen pre-plant and a liquid application after jointing. The 14% minimum desirable protein level was met by producers using both irrigation systems. There is a delicate point at which withholding later water will increase protein in the kernels. However, it must be done without stressing the plant too much.

Kent McVay discussed how to select a spring wheat variety. Three Montana research stations conduct variety trials on flood irrigated fields. A new spring wheat variety release by Montana is Duclair, a solid stem variety. McVay noted that there may be as much as 35% to 40% yield difference between the lowest and highest performing variety. New varieties are being released that have high protein levels. Look at variety’s performance over several years in several locations rather than just one year of research data. Montana has developed some solid stem varieties, such as Choteau, that will resist the Wheat Stem Sawfly.

## **2011 SUNFLOWER Crop**

The confectionary sunflower crop in the Big Horn Basin was of excellent quality and high yield. Variable fall weather affected the moisture content of some bin of

sunflowers. Both growers and Dahlgren, the contractor, were pleased. Dahlgren is now making calls for 2012 contracts.

There are questions to be answered by sunflower research –

- What is the best stand population
- How can we dry plant down for harvest
- When should the last irrigation take place

The Powell Research Station will be investigating some of these questions in 2012.

## **2011 SUGAR BEET Crop**

The Western Sugar Cooperative, a producer coop operating in 4 states (CO, WY, MT, NE) on over 120,000 acres, reported an excellent year to its members. In the Big Horn Basin sugar beets averaged 17.2% sugar content and 28.89 tons/acre. This was a record year for production.

Wet harvest conditions were the only challenge this year. After it dried out, harvest went smoothly. The 2011 crop was Roundup Ready sugar beets grown under partial regulation. The expectation is that Roundup Ready sugar beets will be the 2012 crop as well.

## **WHY You should be out of the Hay Business!** **Jim Gerrish, independent grazing consultant**

Jim Gerrish, an independent grazing consultant and writer for the Stockman Grass-Farmer magazine, addressed the costs and rewards of growing hay at the Northwest College Spring Roundup, Jan 19 & 20 in Powell.

Gerrish began by pointing out that every hay field has a base level of mineral nutrition in it. Hay producers usually add more in the form of nitrogen and/or phosphorous. From 1973 to 2011 input costs for fertilizer have increased 10 times,

while cattle prices have increased only 2 times. The cost to produce a ton of hay is very important to profit/loss, but few producers consider all the production costs.

Gerrish believes 80% of the nutrition in the field is removed when hay is removed. “When you buy hay, you buy fertility,” said Gerrish. He pointed out that the cost of annual replenishment of nutrients versus the price received for hay may not justify continued hay production to sell. If, however, you pasture stocker cattle, 90% of the nutrients grazed by the cattle will pass through and remain in the field.

Gerrish stated that in general, in the western US, the cost of production is \$80 to \$100/ton of hay. Sell it for a profit!

## **HAY DEMAND FOR NEW CHEESE FACTORY**

Donn Randall, Wyoming Business Council, reported that a new cheese factory will be built in Greeley, Colorado. The factory will require milk production from 60,000 new cows in the region. The alfalfa hay demand for the region will be substantially increased. Hay quality must meet dairy requirements and be consistent. He noted that square bales are best for loading semi-tractor trailers.

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