



Making a Difference

2015 – 2016

Crop Production Program Focus Team Production, Protection, and Profit

Grand Challenges

K-State Research and Extension: providing education you can trust to help people, businesses, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future.

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Kansas State University
Agricultural Experiment
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Extension Service
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Situation

Wheat is arguably the most economically important crop in Kansas with nearly 8.5 million acres planted annually. Approximately half of the crop produced in Kansas is exported, reflecting its contribution to global food systems, one of K-State Research and Extension's five grand challenges.

Kansas Extension agents have a wide network of county wheat demonstration plots with more than 70 wheat tours scheduled in 2016. The wheat demonstration plots and tours are an opportunity for agents, extension specialists, and public and private wheat breeders to educate growers about the best varieties for their area. Additionally, best management practices for wheat including disease management, soil fertility, and planting practices are discussed.

What We Did

In the south central Kansas counties of Sumner, Cowley, Sedgwick, Harper, and Harvey, local agents and extension specialists planted seven replicated wheat variety plots to generate statistically valid yield results for local growers. In addition, field plot tours at each site and summer preplant wheat schools highlight the replicated plot results and discuss important management practices to increase grower profitability.

Outcomes

At the completion of summer harvest, a final yield report is generated and released through the county agents to local clientele via newsletter, email, and social media. In preparation for the 2016-17 wheat growing season, plot results were shared at preplant wheat meetings in Wichita and Oxford. Growers completed a survey on the value gained from the wheat variety plot data because of improved variety selection (120 in attendance with nearly half responding to the survey).

Of the respondents, 97 percent found the information valuable or very valuable with 98 percent indicating that the information they receive impacts their decision on wheat variety selection.

In addition, 42 growers included their wheat acreage and the dollars per acre improvement they felt our data had on their operation. Nearly 47,000 wheat acres were represented at the two meetings with approximately \$400,000 to \$650,000 in improvement gained.

Success Story

A producer visited with Randy Hein, Sumner County agent, about the 2012 wheat plot results and noticed that the three varieties he had been saving for numerous years were three of the lower-yielding varieties in our tests. The next season he replaced two of his older varieties with newer higher-yielding varieties and told Randy that 2013 was one of the best wheat production years he had ever experienced.

