

California Wheat

Made with the Golden Touch!

CWC Wheat Bulletin Research Update

January 13, 2011

Major Wheat and Barley Grant Announced

Roger Beachy, director of USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture, announced a "significant investment" in wheat and barley research at UC Davis yesterday. Dr. Jorge Dubcovsky, UCD wheat breeder, led the successful effort to win the \$25 million competitive grant that will fund research activities at over 50 universities and research centers in 21 states. According to UC Davis,

"The researchers will work to identify variations in wheat and barley genes that can enhance the ability of the plants to resist disease, make efficient use of water and nitrogen, and optimize crop yield. These discoveries will help plant breeders develop varieties of wheat and barley that will thrive and be productive despite anticipated climate variability.

The five-year project also will develop a Plant Breeding Education Network to train 30 new doctoral students in plant breeding and provide educational opportunities for 100 undergraduate students interested in plant improvement."

The California Wheat Commission joined other state wheat commissions and the National Association of Wheat Growers in supporting the grant application.

Commission to Contribute to New Planter

Kent Brittan, Farm Advisor for Yolo, Solano and Sacramento counties, and Director for Yolo County Cooperative Extension, directs a program that has been conducting grain research in the Sacramento region for over 40 years. This program evaluates new grain cultivars in four distinct growing areas within the three-county region, providing valuable information to local growers and the statewide wheat research program.

The 60-year old planter that Brittan has been using in his trials is "worn out" so he approached the Commission for help in acquiring a new one.

"The California Wheat Commission has two major priorities," said Commission Chairman Larry Hunn. "We collect grower assessments and put those dollars toward research into new and improved wheat varieties and toward market development. Kent Brittan's research program is very useful and we are pleased to help him get this essential equipment." The Commission agreed to pay for half of the cost of the planter, up to \$10,000.

CWC Funds Additional Field Research

Last October, the California Wheat Commission initiated a new mini-grants program for farm advisors and specialists working on wheat projects. Projects being funded in current crop year include:

- Use of Chlorophyll Meters to Assess Nitrogen Fertilization - Brian Marsh
- Optimizing subsurface drip and overhead irrigation with wheat and cotton - Jeff Mitchell
- Effects of Herbicides & Application Time - Steve Wright
- Wheat Fertilization in Imperial Valley - Khaled Bali
- Nitrogen Fertilization on Spring Wheat - Steve Orloff
- Regional Suitability of New Wheat, Triticale, and Barley - Kent Brittan

Grants range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for the one-year projects. Results of the research will be made available to California wheat producers through the Commission's website, Cooperative Extension newsletters and field meetings. In April, the Commission will consider funding for additional grants as part of FY 11/12 budget discussion.