



## *CWC Wheat Bulletin*

*April 15, 2013*

### **California Wheat Commission Approves Program Priorities for FY 13/14**

Commission members gathered in Woodland last week to consider and approve the priorities for the new fiscal year beginning May 1, 2013. The top priority remains supporting research to improve yield and end use quality of California wheat varieties. Research represents over 30% of the Commission's budget, including funding for Dr. Jorge Dubcovsky's breeding program at UC Davis, the statewide variety trials, grants for UC Cooperative Extension farm advisors, and support for root research at UC Riverside. Jorge attended the meeting and provided an update on the various projects.

Market development is another major Commission activity. The Commission will continue its active participation in U.S. Wheat Associates, which works to promote California wheat worldwide, and Wheat Foods Council, which actively communicates the nutritional value of wheat foods in the domestic market. The Commission will also track the proposed merger in the milling sector, which will likely affect California wheat growers.

The Commission also discussed expanding the activities of the Commission's milling and baking quality lab. With increased interest among bakers in understanding grain quality, the Commission is considering offering new courses to help address the many questions that bakers and consumers are asking about wheat. This will be discussed further at the August meeting.

### **Commissioners Comment on Crop**

As part of last week's meeting, the Commissioners from around the state provided an update on how the wheat crop looks:

**Roy Motter, Imperial County:** The Durum acreage in the desert is one half of last year's acreage, primarily due to Durum's low market price. It is looking like it will be a normal crop this year.

**Ron Rubin, Imperial County:** Ron agreed with Roy's report and noted, as an aside, that he is helping the University of Minnesota with a study on the early detection of UG99 (stem rust) by growing 7 different lines of wheat from around the world that have no known stem rust resistance.

**Ron Leimgruber, Imperial Valley:** He thinks the water issues in the Imperial Valley had a lot to do with the lower Durum acreage in the Imperial Valley. This is the first year that water is being allocated, which caused an uncertainty for many growers. Last week's strong wind caused severe lodging.

**Kirk Elholm, Kern County:** A lot of the wheat is burned up, there is no water, and a lot of ground is going into permanent crops. The irrigated ground looks good, but there is not a lot of it in his area.

**Scott Schmidt, Fresno County:** By and large, the grain crop looks pretty good. Acres are up. They have had the driest January, February, and March on record. Their dryland fields don't even have enough for the sheep. They are seeing a lot of herbicide damage because the ground is not being broken up as thoroughly as before, leaving more residues from previous crops.

**Dennis Pelucca, Stanislaus and San Joaquin Counties:** Most of the wheat & forage is heading out and looking good. Some wheat fields may get diverted into the silage/forage market. The last rains

were about one week late for some of the Westside dryland fields that were in the “wilting” stage. In the Delta region which was planted later, most has tillered and had weed control employed. Of concern is the large amount of open ground that has been converted to tree crops; as a result, there is a minor reduction in wheat acreage.

**Mike Scriven, Delta:** The Delta area actually benefited from the record dry January and February because the heavier soil types can hold too much water in a heavier rainfall year. The fields look good.

**Alan Freese, Solano County:** The last couple recent rains have really perked things up considerably from 10 days ago when fields were started to get very dry.

**Larry Hunn, Delta:** Everything looks good. The wheat is flowering out now. They have actually had to irrigate, which is often not even needed in normal rain years.

**Erik Freese, Solano County:** The wheat looks really good around the Davis and Dixon area. They irrigated where they could.

**Tom Millar, Glenn & Colusa County:** The Westside dryland fields are gone; not even enough for hay. The river bottom land looks good. The wheat came out of the ground good, but there was too much rain in November and December for the clay soils; most of the river bottom fields have recovered.

**Lee Jackson, retired Agronomy Extension Specialist and At-Large Commissioner:** For the most part, the crop looks good in the Central Valley. It is heading out now. The one problem area is the rain-fed areas of the Southern part of the San Joaquin Valley; some dryland fields are looking like they might have to be grazed off. The irrigated acreage has had adequate rainfall. **There have been hardly any visible signs of stripe rust so far this year.**

Last year was the first year that there had not been a new race of stripe rust with additional virulence identified.

**Geoff Schulz, Penny Newman Grain and Handler Commissioner:** They are not seeing any stripe rust. The irrigated fields look good. The dryland fields got off to a good start, but then it was very dry in January and February; many of these fields will probably have to be grazed off.

**J.W. Cope, Winema Elevators, and Handler Commissioner:** Spring planting hasn't started yet. The water situation up north is pretty dire; they're at about 50% of normal rainfall, and most of that came in late November through December. Water cut-offs loom. Growers are attempting to make plans for what they are going to plant this Spring. There will be a

somewhat limited amount of grain wheat, especially if there are water shortages. The winter wheat that was planted was mostly Yamhill, which is mostly for forage/hay.

### **2013 Variety Survey Released**

An estimated 690,000 acres of wheat were planted in California for the 2013 harvest year, down 6% from acreage reported in last year's Variety Survey. Red wheat showed a 5% increase in acreage from last year, white varieties showed a similar percentage decrease. A large downward shift in Durum acreage occurred this planting season. Only 52% of last year's acreage was planted, due mainly to lower Durum prices. Approximately 75% of the California acreage planted this season was planted to red wheat varieties, with 10% and 15% planted to Durum and white varieties, respectively. About 82% of all California wheat acres were planted in the Central Valley of California, with nearly 65% grown in the San Joaquin Valley alone.

### **RED AND WHITE WHEAT:**

Hard Red wheat remains the top wheat class grown in California. The varieties Joaquin and Cal Rojo were the top (predominately grain-use) red varieties planted in the state; PR 1404 and WB-Patron headed the list of forage-type wheat varieties planted. Blanca Grande 515, with over 60% of Hard White acres sown, was the leading Hard White variety. As usual, the Intermountain region had the vast majority of Soft White acres; Yamhill and Alpowa topped this region's wheat variety plantings. Yecora Rojo still dominates the Southern California region.

### **DURUM:**

Durum planted acreage in both the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California was considerably down this year. Desert King, Orita, and Havasu were still the top planted varieties in Southern California. San Joaquin Valley Durum plantings were fairly equally split among Volante, Westmore, and Platinum, the top three Durum varieties in that region.

The full report appears on our website.

### **Upcoming Field Days:**

- **Kings/Tulare Field Day - April 30**
- **UC Davis Field Day - May 15**