

Local Farmer Gets 70 Bushel Yield in First Try With Triticale

What is triticale?

It's a high yielding grain, grown for the first time in Lancaster County this year.

It's a cross between wheat and rye. Standing in the field, it's the height of wheat, with longer, higher yielding heads which have beards. The straw has thicker stems than wheat, making a courser straw.

The grain itself looks very much like wheat, except somewhat larger and shriveled in appearance.

But though it looks and grows like wheat, triticale is not wheat. And the difference is exciting to the Lancaster County farmer who grew four acres of it this year.

He is Robert W. Armstrong, Drumore RD1. Armstrong completed harvest of his first crop of triticale about 10 days ago and he's very enthused about the results.

Despite a partial freeze-out, Armstrong reports an average yield of 70 bushels per acre on four acres. He figures that's about a 25 bushel per acre increase over the 45 bushel he would expect to get from wheat.

On two of the four acres, the triticale yield was about 85 bushels, but the two acres on the north side of the hill were partially frozen and the yield there was only about 55 bushels.

While Armstrong is pleased with his 70 bushel yield, he's not satisfied. He's now trying to obtain seed for a new variety of triticale which he believes could boost his yield to 100

bushels per acre next year.

Armstrong notes that high straw prices — nearly competitive with hay in recent months — helps make the grain crop competitive with alternative crops. Armstrong thinks declining wheat production all over the U.S. could keep straw prices high even though farmers are turning to alternative bedding sources.

Feed Value High

The yield on triticale is good, but what about the feed value?

Armstrong is also enthusiastic here. He quotes a study comparing protein content of triticale, milo and shelled corn as follows:

Crude protein — triticale, 17.34 per cent; milo, 10.42 per cent, and shelled corn, 9.28 per cent; digestible protein — triticale, 14.58 per cent; milo, 8.12 per cent, and shelled corn, 7.15 per cent.

His figures also show triticale has high TDN content as follows: corn, 82.30 per cent; triticale, 80.17 per cent, and milo, 77.82 per cent.

Armstrong is particularly enthused about the high protein content of triticale. He will have his own triticale tested by Brookside Research Laboratories, Inc. New Knoxville, Ohio, for feed value.

He plans to feed triticale to his swine in place of wheat which would normally go into the ration. He thinks the biggest benefit of feeding triticale will be in lowering cost of production.

The Armstrong farm is located just over the hill from the new Muddy Run Dam near the Susquehanna River.

Armstrong's swine operation consists of about 100 head of sows and gilts. He sells around 600 fattened animals and about 400 feeder pigs per year.

With his fattening animals,



Robert W. Armstrong, Drumore RD1 swine producer, displays some of the triticale, a new grain crop, he grew on his

farm this summer. Armstrong is interested in the new crop for both its high yield and high feed value.

he plans to start feeding triticale at about the 60 pound size.

He used liquid waste from his hog operation as fertilizer for the triticale. Applied at the rate of about 2,000 gallons plowed under per acre and another 500 gallons on top the ground, the recommendation of Brookside Lab, he figures the application was about equal to a 125-50-50 application of fertilizer.

Armstrong notes that Triticale was developed by Jenkins Foundation for Research, Salinas, California, for use in

winning the race against world famine. The research began in 1953. The effect now is to improve triticale varieties already developed and it's one of the new, improved varieties that Armstrong is hoping to get for next year.

He obtained this year's seed through John Eshleman, Hagerstown, Md., who is also growing some and plans to feed it to

his dairy cows. Recently International Commodities Corp., a beef ranch operation, acquired rights to the seed.

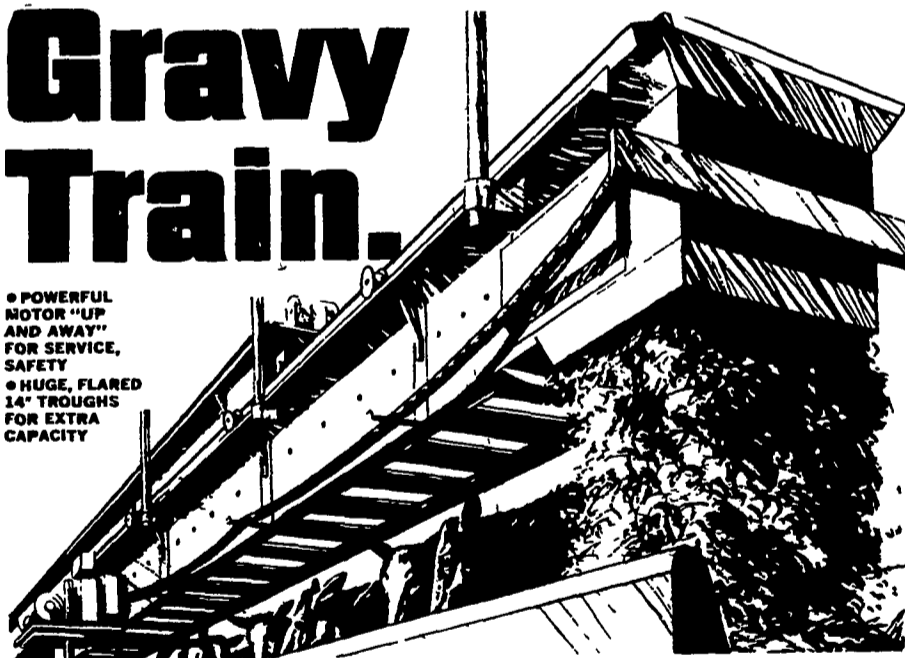
With triticale being nearly equal to corn on energy and considerably higher in protein, and with the prospect for 100 bushel per acre yields on his relatively hilly ground, Armstrong is enthusiastic about the new crop's prospects.

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