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# How to choose fall small grains

NEWARK, Del. — Many farmers are buying small grain seed now to plant this fall after corn and soybeans are harvested. It's sometimes hard to choose what varieties to plant, since performance varies a lot from year to year.

For this reason, University of Delaware extension crops specialist Frank Webb urges farmers to look at three to four year averages, rather than single year results, when selecting a small grain variety. This way you're more likely to have a good crop regardless of the vagaries of the weather.

Webb suggests growers take a close look at some of the new wheat and barley varieties that have done well in local performance trials over the past few years. Results are now available on the 1980 trials. These were conducted by the Delaware Extension Service at two locations — the university's Georgetown Substation and the Wesley Webb farm near Sandtown.

"If some of these varieties look good to you," he says, "try a small lot of seed on your own farm this fall. It will give you a chance to evaluate some of the newest releases on the market and

may give you a year or two jump on a variety that's not yet commercially available in large supply."

If you find something that does well under your particular growing conditions, you may want to save some of the grain to plant next year. This way you won't have to compete with everyone else for seed of a highly desirable new variety.

Wheat varieties that looked good this year were Delta Queen, McNair 1003, Pioneer S-76 and S-78, and Titan.

Potomac and Coker 747 were omitted from the 1980

Delaware trial by mistake but performed satisfactorily in University of Maryland tests. Though Abe, Arthur and Arthur 71 are still doing fairly well, if seed of some of these other varieties is available, Webb suggests giving them a try.

At Georgetown both wheat and barley were planted in a loamy sand soil October 25 last year at the rate of 1.5 bushels per acre (wheat) and two bushels per acre (barley).

Plots were top-dressed in the spring with 70 pounds of nitrogen per acre. Potassium and phosphorus were applied in the fall according to soil test recommendations. Plots yielded an average of 36.8 bushels (wheat) and 39.7 (barley).

The Sandtown planting date for both grains was October 29, using the same population rates as at Georgetown. Soil type was a sandy loam. Plots were top-dressed in spring with 700 pounds per acre of 10-10-10. There were four replications of each variety, none irrigated.

Delta Queen, a southern introduction, gave the best yielding performance this year, ranking second out of 19 varieties at Georgetown with 42.5 bushels an acre and fourth at Sandtown with 49 bushels an acre. Most of the lines that outranked it are not yet commercially available.

Another variety that continues to look good is McNair 1003. This was commercially available for the first time last year. It yielded 37.8 bushels at Georgetown and 47.4 at Sandtown this summer.

Pioneer S-76 gave 33.3 bushels at Georgetown, 48.8 at Sandtown. Pioneer S-78 had a similar performance, with 42.8 bushels at Georgetown and 42.4 at Sandtown. Both these lines showed fairly good disease resistance.

Titan, a southern release being tested for the second time in these trials, looked very good again at both locations, says Webb. It averaged 42.0 bushels an acre at Georgetown and 49.8 at Sandtown.

Since southern varieties don't always do well in Delaware's more northern climate, however, he recommends caution before committing yourself to large acreages of either Delta Queen or Titan until they've proven themselves in further testing.

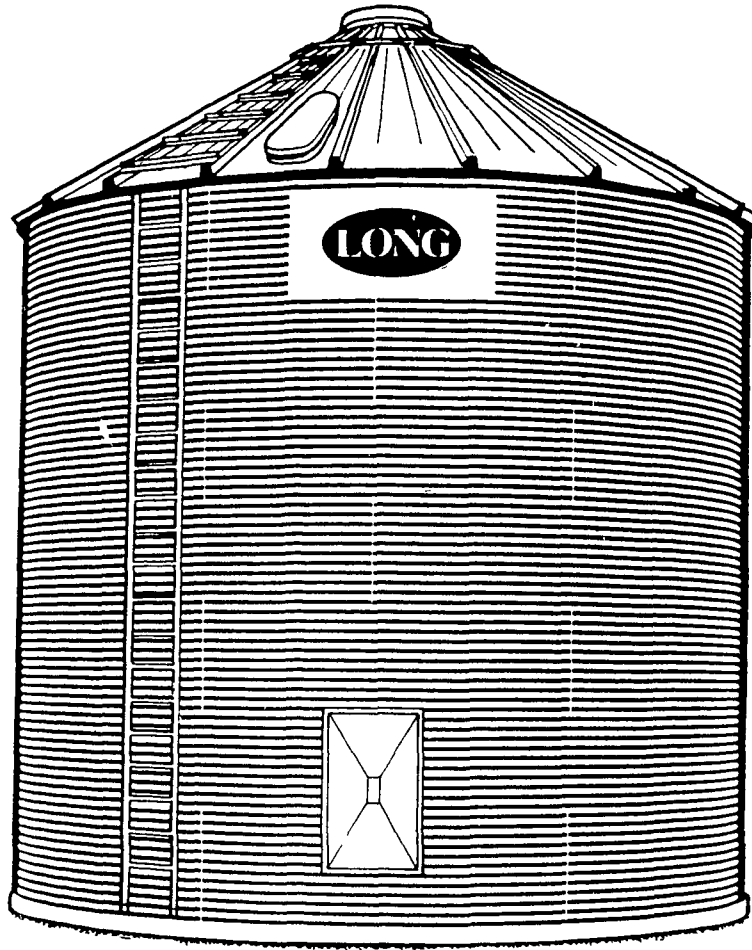
Barley varieties that looked good were Volbar, Boone, Henry, Pennrao, Harrison, Jefferson, Maury and Surry, depending on location.

(Turn to Page C30)



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