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WHEAT VARIETIES FOR MICHIGAN



A Field of American Banner Wheat In Clinton County Yielded
51 Bushels Per Acre in 1927

THE MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE
Of Agriculture and Applied Science

EXTENSION DIVISION

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WHEAT VARIETIES FOR MICHIGAN

By H. C. RATHER

Michigan is splendidly adapted to the production of soft wheat. Her climate and her soils produce wheat which is most desirable for crackers, pastry, and breakfast food products.

Wheat grown in Michigan is much more likely to be on a domestic than an export basis because the area which produces soft wheats is much smaller than that which produces wheat for bread flour. This was particularly true in the season of 1928, when soft wheats brought a very marked premium over hard wheats, because extensive winter-killing in the soft wheat producing States reduced the acreage harvested.

On the St. Louis market, where number two hard red and number two soft red wheats were selling side by side, the premium for the latter during the season of 1928 varied from 36 cents a bushel in September to 9 cents a bushel in May of 1929.

A surplus in the soft wheat area would, of course, place this wheat on an export basis at a price comparable to or slightly under bread flour wheats, but, in all probability, Michigan wheat will bring as good a price, and frequently a slightly better one, than bread flour wheat, as long as the farmers of this state maintain a satisfactory production of the quality of wheat needed by the millers who use wheat from this territory.

American Banner a Desirable White Wheat

In general, Michigan's real opportunity lies in the production of a weak flour, white wheat which is essential to the manufacture of breakfast food and to much of the pastry flour industry. There is no satisfactory substitute for this type of wheat.

No wheat in this State, which is now available in quantity, excels the American Banner variety for this purpose. American Banner wheat is beardless, has a stiff, long straw, does not shatter readily, and is one of the most productive of all white wheats.

In over-state variety tests, American Banner wheat has equaled or excelled all other commercial white wheats in production per acre and it has equaled Red Rock. In fact, American Banner usually surpasses Red Rock on the lighter soils, though it has not been quite so productive as Red Rock in tests on the Michigan State College farm.

Since no other white wheat has been found which consistently surpasses American Banner, or even equals it, there is no apparent reason why this should not be the standard white wheat for Michigan, thereby eliminating much confusion.

Red Rock Still In Good Favor

Red Rock wheat was one of the first of the new crops varieties to be released from the Michigan Experiment Station. It has proved its worth

time after time. In years such as 1928, when a certain type of winter-killing takes a heavy toll, Red Rock is apt to slump badly, but, for average production over a four to six year period, it has excelled all commercial varieties both in tests at the Michigan Experiment Station and on farms in several parts of the State.

Red Rock is a bearded, soft, red winter wheat with an unusually stiff straw. Its quality is excellent from a market standpoint and its flour is quite strong for a soft wheat.

For a farmer who plans to grow red wheat on well drained soil of the heavier type, a soil high in organic matter, no commercial red wheat variety now available in Michigan is likely to equal Red Rock in average yield for a four to six year period.

Berkeley Rock Smut Resistant

Berkeley Rock, a bearded soft or semi-hard red wheat, has two marked advantages. It withstands the type of winter-killing which was so prevalent in the spring of 1928 better than any other Michigan variety, and it is very resistant in fact, almost immune, to stinking smut. Grain of best test weight and apparent quality is produced when Berkeley Rock is grown on a soil with plenty of organic matter or available nitrate fertilizer.

This variety is recommended on Michigan soils where winter killing is most likely to occur. In 1928 tests, it frequently was the only variety to make a successful crop. Its use is suggested for the eastern part of the Thumb district, following the heavier soils on down the eastern side of the state to the Ohio border.

Factors in Profitable Wheat Culture

Pure seed of good varieties, together with improved cultural methods, have made Michigan wheat fields more productive than they ever were, even in the early days of Michigan agriculture when soils were charged with their original fertility.

The average Michigan farmer produced as much wheat on nine acres during the past 10 year period as his predecessor did on 11.5 acres 30 or 40 years ago.

The following factors need attention to assure, as far as possible, profitable wheat production:

1. Pure seed of a high-yielding variety
2. Clean seed free from rye, cockle, chess, and other undesirable weeds or mixtures
3. Choice of a kind of wheat desired by millers purchasing Michigan wheat
4. Legumes such as alfalfa, sweet clover, or red clover in rotation, at least once every three or four years
5. Use of proper fertilizer. See Bulletin No. 53, "Fertilizer Recommendations for 1929." (Michigan State College.)
6. Proper tillage and harvesting equipment to handle the crop economically
7. Harvesting and handling the wheat so the threshed grain will contain less than 14 per cent moisture. Many elevators are equipped with moisture testers and will be glad to determine the moisture content of your crop. Excess moisture means discount wheat.
8. Good storage to condition the wheat and, if necessary to hold it long

enough to avoid the market gluts which so frequently come just at harvest time.

A comparison of the yields of some standard wheat varieties with Red Rock in Michigan over-state variety tests conducted during the past eight years.*

Variety	No. of Trials	Average yield bus. per acre
Red Rock vs. Portage		
Red Rock	5	25.9
Portage		23.8
Red Rock vs. Gladden		
Red Rock	5	25.9
Gladden		22.9
Red Rock vs. Trumbull		
Red Rock	10	24.4
Trumbull		22.4
Red Rock vs. Egyptian		
Red Rock	9	24.5
Egyptian		24.3
American Banner vs. Red Rock		
American Banner	10	21.7
Red Rock		21.4
Berkeley Rock vs. Red Rock		
Berkeley Rock	5	23.5 [†]
Red Rock		20.2

*For a comparison of yield and varietal characteristics of various wheats tried out at the Michigan Experiment Station at East Lansing, see Technical Bulletin No. 88, "Investigations With Winter Wheats," published by the Michigan Experiment Station, East Lansing, Michigan.

[†]Four of these tests were in 1928, when Berkeley Rock wheat came through the winter much better than Red Rock wheat.