

Certified Seed Doesn't Cost it Pays

Wheat planting season is just around the corner and determining what seed to use can be a challenging decision for many farmers. As input costs on farms increase, seed selection can make a difference in profit come harvest time.

Planting certified seed encourages seed germination, weed reduction, quality stand establishment and assures varietal purity. Purchasing certified seed allows farmers to get the desired variety with fewer management concerns.

Steve Schuler, director of the Kansas Crop Improvement Association, said, "Certified Seed is produced under a system of standards and observation that should give you the best chance at excellent stand establishment. Using certified seed gives you confidence that you will get your crop up."

Gordon Wiebe, a farmer and certified seed producer from Whitewater, Kansas makes it a point to use certified seed because he believes in starting with a quality, guaranteed product.

He believes that using certified seed has lowered his input costs. By selecting pure certified seed varieties with strong resistance to rust pressures, Wiebe sees the amount of fungicide and herbicide that he has to spray on his crop each year declining.

"We like to start with a good product because it helps us manage the crop well all the way through," said Wiebe.

Studies have shown that an added benefit of certified seed can be a boost in yields. Research at Kansas State University indicates that the use of certified seed can increase yields two to three bushels per acre over bin-run seed.

Beyond the benefits of quality and yield that certified seed brings, labor costs associated with cleaning your own seed can add up.

"If you want to maintain a variety in good condition, you need to take the same steps that a seedsman takes. This means taking the extra time to clean out equipment, storing the seed in a quality location, and cleaning the seed," Schuler said.

The Kansas Crop Improvement Association believes planting with certified seed gives a producer confidence that their legal purchase of professionally produced seed supports research and development that will bring forth the varieties that will be used in the future.

New varieties are developed to provide disease resistance, better performance and higher yields. Planting with certified seed is the only way to obtain access to these pure and new varieties.

Quality assurance of certified seed provides clean seed to the producer that has met minimum standards for varietal purity, test weight, germination, amount of inert material, cleanliness and seed size.

Schuler said, "In a wheat crop, seed is not your most expensive input. It seems unwise to me to skimp in the quality of the seed you are planting because you base the success of all your other inputs and income on your farm on that seed."

To purchase certified seed, log on to www.kscrop.org to find a producer in your area. The Kansas Seed Book, which contains the certified seed directory and Kansas State University performance data can also be found on the KCIA website