How to Start the Spring Wheat Season Strong

A season is only as strong as its start, and as the new year begins, the time to start thinking about spring wheat is now. It’s never too early to start planning and making decisions about your planting practices. Following are three things to consider when thinking about the upcoming wheat season.

1. Variety Selection

Growers should always consider yield potential when deciding which spring wheat varieties to plant. When evaluating previous yield results, be mindful not to put too much stock in a single report; always try to use multiyear and multilocation regional data to make decisions. Another way to increase yield potential is to take the time to evaluate new genetic selections before planting. Genetic advances occur often, and while planting old genetics may be convenient, comfortable and familiar, this can cost the grower bushels of production.

Another thing growers should consider is the seed’s quality characteristics. For Hard Red Spring varieties, protein should be a strong focus. High protein, at least 13 percent, is a characteristic millers and bakers seek. Figure out the quality characteristics that your buyers want, and then select based on those needs.

Finally, finding a disease resistance package that is well-suited for your area is a must. While diseases can be managed with proper scouting and spraying, knowing the genetics of your variety will help you determine what to watch for during the season.

2. Seed Treatments

Seed treatment applications help seedlings thrive during the spring wheat planting season because they are successful at keeping diseases at bay until the wheat seedling establishes. Applying seed treatments containing insecticides and fungicides will ensure that seedlings are protected from a broad range of seed-borne and soil-borne diseases as well as insects.

Think of the use of treated seed as insurance – it protects against diseases and increases overall plant health. Pick a broad-spectrum treatment with multiple modes of action that guards against multiple pathogens and insects and provides longevity and efficacy.

3. Optimal Seeding Rates
Seed size matters. Depending on the size of your seed, you could be overseeding or underseeding, both of which affect yield potential in the long run. While many wheat growers have traditionally planted based on pounds per acre, studies continue to prove planting based on a seed count per acre can improve yield and profit potential.

WestBred seed suppliers can provide their growers with an Optimal Seeding Rate recommendation that takes seed count into consideration, as well as location, planting date, production practices and target seeds per acre. With this recommendation, all growers need to do is calibrate their drills and plant with confidence.

**About WestBred Wheat**
WestBred wheat provides seed suppliers and their growers access to the highest yield potential wheat seed, as well as testing, education, resources and experienced representatives to help maximize their yield potential.

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