

New winter wheat varieties outlined

Elevate, Wildfire and Goldrush are among the newer varieties of winter wheat that stem from Agriculture Canada wheat breeding efforts.

Wheat breeder Rob Graf outlined some of the varieties' attributes June 7 during a plot hop organized by Lethbridge-based Farming Smarter.

Elevate

Registered in 2014, Elevate was an attempt to find a variety suitable for all of Western Canada.

"We almost got there," said Graf.

However, the variety's intermediate resistance to fusarium head blight has broken down, likely due to arrival of a new disease race. Elevate yields six to seven percent more than Radiant, with shorter, stronger straw and good winter hardiness. It yields better than other types in southern Alberta's dry conditions.

It matures two days earlier on average than Radiant, which is the winter wheat mainstay in southern Alberta.

Wildfire

"Wildfire in my opinion is a real breakthrough in terms of yield. It's yielding 14 to 17 percent more than Radiant, and that's a huge jump in yield," said Graf. "This is the highest yielding variety."

Wildfire has good straw strength, though not as good as Radiant or Gateway, and is resistant to stripe rust, moderately resistant to bunt and fusarium and matures slightly later than Radiant.

Graf said he does not recommend Wildfire for the eastern Prairies because it has no stem rust resistance.

Wildfire is also very leafy, covering the soil quickly for better weed suppression.

Goldrush

This variety was registered in 2016 and works well in Alberta, although Elevate and Wildfire tend to be better. Goldrush does better in Saskatchewan, partly due to its winter hardiness but also due to other factors yet to be understood, said Graf.

Icefield

This hard white winter wheat is the first of its kind in Western Canada. Graf said Agriculture Canada is working with FP Genetics and CIGI to generate interest for the variety within the marketplace. It has white seed, good gluten strength but lower protein, and is ideal for Asian steam buns and noodles.

Icefield has a good rust package and intermediate resistance to fusarium.