

IMPACT



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Magic Valley Cereal School Provides a Variety of Information

The Situation

Wheat and barley production accounts for approximately 27% of the total crop acres in Twin Falls, Jerome, Gooding, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Cassia counties. With low commodity prices the past few years, providing research based information that will promote production efficiency, so as to improve the producer's bottom line, is a priority.

Our Response

The University of Idaho Magic Valley Cereal School is held every winter in Burley, Idaho in conjunction with other University of Idaho cereal schools located in eastern Idaho and the Wood River Valley. During the fall prior to the school a committee of small grain professionals, researchers and extension meet to discuss topics, suggest speakers, and organize the event to insure the school meets the needs of area producers.

The purpose of the school is to provide research based information related to cereal production and marketing. In addition, the school provides an opportunity for the Idaho Wheat Commission, Idaho Barley Commission, and Idaho Grain Producers Association to update small grain producers on the activities and accomplishments of their organizations, as well as an opportunity for producers to ask questions and discuss future plans and opportunities in the grain industry.

Program Outcomes

From 2001 through 2003, 232 producers, fieldmen, consultants, university and industry professionals attended the University of Idaho Magic Valley Cereal School. Of those, 123 participants received one pesticide recertification credit.

In the past three years the school has focused on such topics as herbicide use, managing protein in barley, raising wheat for end-use quality, irrigation management, small grains for forage, soil microbiology, and disease management.

Producing a wheat crop with consistent end-use qualities has been a focus of the commodity commissions, wheat-breeding program, and wheat marketers. Through presentations on variety characteristics, explaining what end-use quality is, and updates from the commodity commissions the school has attempted to make end-use quality a subject of discussion and a factor when choosing a variety. When producers were surveyed at the 2003 school 96% of producers stated that variety selection is important (73%) to somewhat important (23%) when developing a marketing plan as compared to other production expenses. However, only 4% consider end-use quality the primary factor when choosing a variety. Twenty-seven percent stated that they choose their variety based on yield or other production factors, while 69% consider that both production and end-use quality are important.

Evaluation results for various topics from 2002 and 2003 cereal schools

Topic	Understanding/ Knowledge	Before School	After School
Compost Application	Moderate	30%	73%
	Considerable	10%	24%
Soil Microbiology	Moderate	43%	62%
	Considerable	0%	17%
Idaho Straw Burning Program	Moderate	43%	67%
	Considerable	20%	26%
Herbicide Carryover	Moderate	42%	43%
	Considerable	29%	57%
Managing Protein in Barley	Moderate	57%	36%
	Considerable	0%	50%
Wheat End-Use Quality	Moderate	65%	64%
	Considerable	14%	29%

Irrigation management in wheat and barley has also been an area of concern due to several years of drought conditions. Information was presented at two of the three schools discussing water use requirements at various growth stages, water-holding capacity of soils, yield penalty and/or quality loss due to over-irrigation, and irrigation management techniques. After the presentations 39% percent were somewhat willing, 47% were quite willing, and 11% were very willing to re-evaluate or alter their irrigation practices to improve their irrigation management. Additional topic results are presented in the corresponding table.

The Future:

The University of Idaho Magic Valley Cereal School will continue to provide research-based information to aid producers in making wise production, management, and marketing decisions. Based on producer's recommendations, future topics may include insect identification, additional information on end-use quality and marketing, functionality of wheat and barley, new management tools such as GPS, fertility management in grain, weed management, combine adjustment when harvesting barley, and the incorporation of a grower panel.

Cooperators:

University of Idaho Extension
 Idaho Wheat Commission
 Idaho Barley Commission
 Idaho Grain Producers Association
 Paul Seed
 Western Seed
 AgriSource
 Coors

For More Information

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