

RESEARCH

Wheat research benefits producers

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Producing plant

cultivars is like releasing a new technology. Technology changes with the times and allows us to purchase the latest computer or smart-

phone. New varieties of plants (called “cultivars”) are much the same – always changing.

Stocker cattle producers in the Southern Great Plains grow winter wheat for pasture grazing. However, most available wheat varieties being used in southern Oklahoma today are at least 30 years old. To provide producers with the newest cultivars, the Noble Foundation and Oklahoma State University (OSU) have created a five-year collaboration to expand grazing wheat cultivar research and development.

The ultimate goal of our collaboration is to create a new cultivar for producers to graze in the southern Oklahoma and northern Texas region. Ideally, the cultivar would be dual purpose, producing a high grain yield after grazing.

OSU has a rich legacy of producing quality wheat cultivars for grain production, especially for north and west Oklahoma. However, some of these cultivars would fit well in the

southern Oklahoma and northern Texas region as a grazing cultivar, but there has not been an outlet for those lines until now. Brett Carver, Ph.D., wheat breeding and genetics professor at OSU, explained: “This collaboration is beneficial for both organizations. We have access to the latest research and technology to dig deeper into other traits within genetic backgrounds that were previously underexplored. In the long run, we are able to develop and cultivate a better relationship and make better use of our complementary missions. We are better utilizing all of our resources for a better product.”

The first set of genetic materials received from OSU was planted at the end of October 2012. This planting consisted of 36 lines. These vary

from lines that are primarily grain types and would not be available for release. Some are potential grazing types, and others are varieties that are currently being used by producers in the region. All of the cultivars are being evaluated under grazing conditions.

This first trial will end in late spring 2013, and a new trial year will begin with new experimental lines in the fall of 2013. However, some lines that have potential as grazing releases may be evaluated in further research, such as testing under heavier grazing conditions and experiments that explore animal daily gain.

In the end, a Noble-OSU collaboration is once again working to benefit agricultural producers in a tangible way. ■

