



WORLD WHEAT FACTS

Wheat is the staff of life, vital to diets and cultures around the world. The very nature of wheat is at stake in the debate over commercial introduction of genetically modified varieties.

World Wheat Production

- Wheat is grown on more land area worldwide than any other crop and is a close third to rice and corn in total world production.
- In 2000, world wheat production was approximately 21 billion bushels, grown on approximately 520 million acres.
- Monsanto estimates the potential world-wide market for its Roundup-Ready wheat at 300 million acres.
- Wheat is well adapted to harsh environments and is mostly grown on wind swept areas too dry and too cold for rice and corn.
- Nearly 36% of the world's wheat production is in Asia, 17% is in Europe and 16% in North America.
- World leaders in wheat production are, in order: China, India, United States, France, and Russia. The marked increases in wheat production in China and India since the early 1960's is one of the greatest success stories of modern agriculture.
- A global wheat failure would be a disaster that few nations could survive for even one year.

U.S. Wheat Production

- The United States grew just over 62 million acres of wheat in 2000, with an average yield of 41.9 bushels per acre.
- The top states in wheat acreage planted are Kansas, North Dakota, Montana, Oklahoma, and Washington. Other leading producers are Texas, Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota and Minnesota.



- 24% of the wheat planted in the United States is Hard Red Spring wheat.
- The four leading Hard-Red Spring wheat states are North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, and South Dakota.
- The major Hard-Red Winter wheat producing states are Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, and Nebraska.

Wheat Food Use

- Although useful as a livestock feed, wheat is used mainly as a human food. It is nutritious, concentrated, easily stored and transported, and easily processed into various types of food.
- Unlike any other plant-derived food, wheat contains gluten protein, which enables leavened dough to rise by forming minute gas cells that hold carbon dioxide during fermentation. This process produces light textured bread.

- Wheat supplies about 20% of the food calories for the world's people and is a national staple in many countries. In Eastern Europe and Russia, over 30% of the calories consumed come from wheat.
- The per capita consumption of wheat in the United States exceeds that of any other single food staple.
- Besides being a high carbohydrate food, wheat contains valuable protein, minerals, and vitamins. Wheat when balanced by other foods that supply certain amino acids such as lysine, is an efficient source of protein.
- Wheat is the major ingredient in most breads, rolls, crackers, cookies, biscuits, cakes, doughnuts, muffins, pancakes, waffles, noodles, piecrusts, ice cream cones, macaroni, spaghetti, puddings, pizza, and many prepared hot and cold breakfast foods.
- Wheat is used in baby foods, and is a common thickener in soups, gravies, and sauces. Germ, bran, and malt are additional types of wheat products.
- Much of the wheat used for livestock and poultry feed is a by-product of the flour milling industry.
- Wheat straw is used for livestock bedding. The green forage may be grazed by livestock or used as hay or silage. In many areas of the southern Great Plains, wheat serves a dual purpose by being grazed in the fall and early spring and then harvested as a grain crop.
- Industrial uses of wheat grain include starch for paste, alcohol, oil, and gluten.
- Wheat straw is used for newsprint, paperboard, and other paper products.



WORC:

Billings Office

2401 Montana Ave., #301 (406)252-9672
 Billings, MT 59101 (406)252-1092 FAX
 billings@worc.org
 www.worc.org

Washington, D.C. Office

110 Maryland Ave., NE, #307 (202)547-7040
 Washington, DC 20002 (202)543-0978 FAX
 dc@worc.org

Montrose, CO Office

60584 Horizon Drive (970)323-6849
 Montrose, CO 81401 (970)323-8840 FAX
 montrose@worc.org

WORC Member Groups:

DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL

PO Box 1095 (701)483-2851
 Dickinson, ND 58601 (701)483-2854 FAX
 drc@dickinson.ctctel.com
 www.drcinfo.com

DAKOTA RURAL ACTION

PO Box 549 (605)697-5204
 Brookings, SD 57006 (605)697-6230 FAX
 action@dakotarural.org

IDAHO RURAL COUNCIL

PO Box 118 (208)352-4477
 Bliss, ID 83314 (208)352-4645 FAX
 irc@idahoruralcouncil.org
 www.idahoruralcouncil.org

NORTHERN PLAINS RESOURCE COUNCIL

2401 Montana Ave., #200 (406)248-1154
 Billings, MT 59101 (406)248-2110 FAX
 info@nprcmt.org
 www.nprcmt.org

OREGON RURAL ACTION

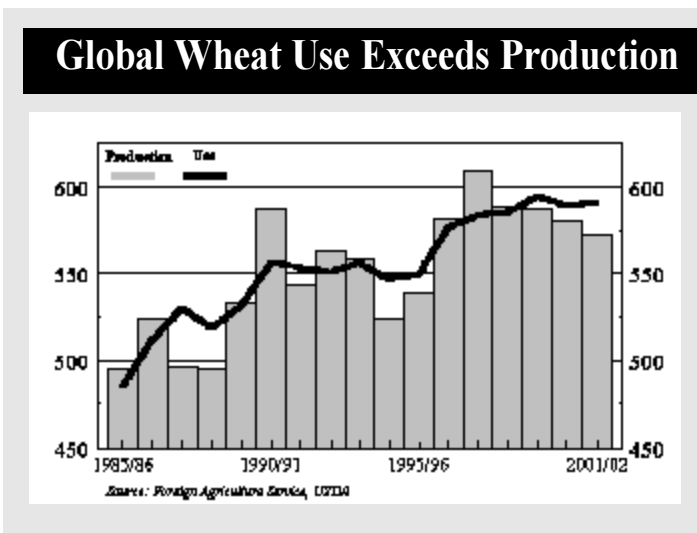
PO Box 1231
 105 Fir Street, #208 (541)975-2411
 La Grande, OR 97850 (541)975-1844 FAX
 jsd@oraction.org
 www.oraction.org

POWDER RIVER BASIN RESOURCE COUNCIL

23 North Scott, #19 (307)672-5809
 Sheridan, WY 82801 (307)672-5800 FAX
 resources@powderriverbasin.org
 www.powderriverbasin.org

WESTERN COLORADO CONGRESS

PO Box 472 (970)249-1978
 Montrose, CO 81402 (970)249-1983 FAX
 info@wccongress.org
 www.wccongress.org



Information adapted from: Iowa State University's Agronomy Website:
http://www.agron.iastate.edu/courses/agron212/Readings/Oat_wheat_history.htm January 2002.