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WHEAT FORAGE YIELDS AT OVERTON FOR 2004-2005 AND TWO-YEAR MEANS

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Background. Wheat can be an important winter forage for cattlemen in Texas. Wheat is also often used as a dual purpose forage and grain crop in many areas. Wheat's growth curve is similar to rye and it normally will produce good forage in December and January. Its total season forage production is normally slightly less than ryegrass, rye, or oats. Wheat, with adequate moisture, will also grow-off rapidly after seeding in a prepared seedbed and produce forage early in the fall. Wheat normally has good winter hardiness and will not winter-kill.

Research Findings. A wheat forage variety test is conducted annually at the TAMU Center at Overton. Commercial and experimental wheat varieties were evaluated during the past 2 years. Fertilizer application rates and dates for the 2004-2005 study are noted in Table 1. Planting dates are early September normally; however in 2004, the planting date was 22 September. Seed were drilled into a prepared seedbed at a 1 inch depth at 110 lb/ac. Seed were planted in 7 rows spaced 6 inches apart. Plot size was 4 x 12 ft with four replications. The plots were harvested with a Swift forage plot harvester at a cutting height of 2 inches on 5 Nov., 11 Jan., 28 Feb., 24 Mar., and 14 Apr. Rainfall was below average in Sept. and delayed planting until late Sept. Adequate moisture from Oct. through Feb. resulted in good forage yields during the winter. From March through May, rainfall was below normal and forage yields were reduced for late spring. In the first harvest on 5 Nov., good forage production is evident. Higher yielding commercial varieties were Coker 9375 and Coker 9663 which were closely followed by other entries. Several experimental lines showed good forage yielding potential as did TAMcale 5019, which is a triticale variety. Triticale is a cross between wheat and rye. In the 2nd harvest on 11 January, good production was obtained on most entries. Higher yielding varieties were Coker 9152, Coker 9375, and Coker 9295. In the 28 February harvest, Coker 9152 and Coker 9295 were higher yielding varieties. In the 24 March harvest, better yielding varieties were Sturdy 2K and Pat. In the last harvest on 14 April, low yields were obtained. For the total season forage yield, Coker 9152 and Coker 9375 were higher producing commercial entries. Of the varieties tested over 2 years, Coker 9152 and Coker 9375 had higher yields but were closely followed by TAMcale 5019 and Pat. Differences in yield between entries smaller than the LSD under each column may be due to chance. We did experience winter freeze damage in 2004-05. Entries with higher freeze damage were generally the lower forage producing lines.

Application. Data presented from these trials should be useful in selecting wheat varieties for your ranch. Depending on variety availability, compare forage yields to determine which variety you want to plant.

Table 1. Wheat forage variety test at Overton, Texas for 2004-2005.

Variety	Harvest 1 Nov. 5	Harvest 2 Jan. 11	Harvest 3 Feb. 28	Harvest 4 Mar. 24	Harvest 5 Apr. 14	Total DMY	% Freeze Damage	2 Yr. Mean
	----------pounds of dry matter per acre----------							
AR 910*	1054	1403	1683	454	716	5310	5	--**
Coker 9152	569	1065	1931	663	769	4997	0	5650
NF94120*	1045	1322	1110	935	466	4878	10	--
6979*	640	949	1679	740	555	4563	8	5100
TX00V1117*	796	821	1006	1138	733	4494	0	--
Coker 9375	730	901	999	1223	593	4446	5	5284
7327X*	735	764	1503	858	502	4362	0	--
TX00D1390*	706	575	846	1728	369	4224	0	4467
5551*	820	1181	795	990	430	4216	3	--
TX01V5314*	922	903	1211	742	379	4157	0	--
TX01M5009*	821	974	1131	760	467	4153	5	--
TAMcale 5019	762	526	990	1083	764	4125	8	5032
7179*	733	844	773	1182	566	4098	3	--
AGRHV 102*	1015	1105	776	502	684	4082	40	--
AGRTS 101*	494	622	1092	972	900	4080	8	--
TX97-172*	661	944	865	1146	435	4051	5	4896
Sturdy 2K	652	733	891	1338	408	4022	5	4949
TX01V6008*	839	882	782	927	564	3994	3	--
Pat	649	761	909	1224	438	3981	3	5004
Coker 9295	698	978	1501	245	536	3958	0	4633
TX01D3232*	801	772	1339	651	309	3872	10	4452
TX02D6629*	760	803	807	865	505	3740	8	--
TX02D7306*	654	598	1467	272	718	3709	3	--
TX01V2598*	623	874	1237	569	404	3707	10	--
TX01V5719*	972	717	882	733	381	3685	13	--
5569*	811	569	684	1394	210	3668	5	--
AGRTS 102*	565	1066	662	529	797	3619	18	--
5645*	646	555	958	1008	442	3609	5	--
AGRTA 101*	651	768	557	590	1004	3570	43	--
AGRHV 103*	859	1159	530	427	583	3558	40	--
TAMcale 6331	516	483	758	940	836	3533	10	4774
TX98V9628*	716	608	789	871	437	3421	10	4621
AGRTS 103*	731	923	609	446	640	3349	38	--
AGRTA 102*	437	944	593	470	800	3244	33	--
Coker 9663	702	553	1167	289	532	3243	3	4201
AGRHV 101*	1130	898	263	258	613	3162	33	--
Grand Mean	748	848	994	810	569	3968	11	--
LSD (0.05 level)	168	182	268	139	167	568	5	--
CV	25	24	30	19	32	16	47	--

Planted September 22, 2004. Fertilization: Preplant 75 lb N, 0 P_2O, and 100 lb K_2O/ac. Topdressed 40 lb N/ac on January 11, 40 lb N/ac and 20 lb N/ac on March 4, and 50 lb N/ac on March 25. Herbicide applied postemergence at 2 leaf stage of wheat; 0.4 oz/ac, Finesse on October 5, 2004.

*Experimental line, seed presently not available for sale.

**Entry not tested over past 2 years.