

University of Idaho

College of Agricultural *and* Life Sciences

July 9 University of Idaho Field Day Highlights Collaborative Wheat Breeding Initiative

MOSCOW, Idaho - June 18, 2012 -- A July 9 wheat breeding field day will feature a first look at top European varieties and showcase the benefits of an innovative collaboration between the University of Idaho and Limagrain Cereal Seeds.

Wheat varieties selected for high production and disease resistance in the United Kingdom, France, Spain, the Czech Republic and Germany will be on display at the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences' Parker Farm two miles east of Moscow.

The field day will begin with registration at 2:30 p.m. The program will begin at 3 p.m. and conclude with a dinner sponsored by Limagrain Cereal Seeds. Wheat researchers from the college and Limagrain Cereal Seeds will review joint efforts to improve wheat varieties available to Idaho and Pacific Northwest growers.

"The field day will give growers and everyone else the chance to see the merits of this innovative collaboration," said Donn Thill, the college's associate dean and Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station director.

The joint field day reflects one aspect of a dramatic year for wheat research at the University of Idaho. The Idaho Wheat Commission began the year by announcing its decision to create two \$1 million endowments to support two wheat breeding and disease researchers.

During the Wheat Commission's January announcement at Boise, college and Limagrain Cereal Seeds officials also announced their intent to collaborate on wheat breeding.

Jim Peterson, vice president for research at Limagrain Cereal Seeds, called the collaboration "an exciting opportunity to build on the complementary strengths of the University of Idaho and Limagrain wheat programs."

Limagrain Cereal Seeds is a new joint venture between the France-based Limagrain Group, the largest cereal seed company in Europe, and Arcadia Biosciences, a biotechnology company based in Davis, Calif.

"The field day will be a chance for participants to see the breeding lines, and they'll see what's being developed and the varieties nearing release to growers," Thill said.

Thill noted the college will reallocate research and extension positions as part of the wheat initiative. The plan includes a Lewiston-based, multi-county University of Idaho Extension position, and a Moscow-based teaching and research plant nutritionist and a research and extension cropping systems agronomist.

Both Limagrain Cereal Seeds and the college will contribute germplasm, technology, and expertise to more rapidly develop varieties with improved productivity and tolerance to diseases and stress. Limagrain Cereal Seeds also intends to help fund research and graduate training at the university.

Cathy Wilson, the Idaho Wheat Commission's director of collaborative research, said the cooperation between private and public researchers offers the chance for rapid advances in grain production. "Where there is collaboration, there is opportunity," she said.

"The field day will be a great opportunity to show off both the University of Idaho and LCS wheat programs and explain how the breeding collaboration will work," Peterson said. "From our side, we are bringing a valuable

international germplasm base to the collaboration, including parent lines with exceptional yield potential and disease resistances."

Doug Finkelnburg, a college staff scientist assigned to oversee the wheat trials, said growers will have a lot more to see at this year's field day. The number of early and advanced generation research plots jumped from some 3,700 last year to 5,200 this year.

The winter wheat at the Palouse Research, Extension and Education Center's Parker Farm is well along toward maturity with a wide array of heights, head shapes and other signs of genetic diversity.

On July 10, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences oilseed and biofuels research will be highlighted during a field day at the Parker Farm. Plant breeder Jack Brown will review canola, rapeseed and mustard advances, including a \$948,000 project to evaluate USDA Agricultural Research Service germplasm.

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