



## *CWC Wheat Bulletin*

*March 5, 2013*

### **California Wheat Commission Referendum Passes**

California wheat growers have once again given their vote of confidence to the California Wheat Commission. In the most recent referendum that was conducted in January and February, over 87% of wheat growers voting were in favor of continuing the California Wheat Commission's programs for the next five years.

The State Food and Agriculture code mandates the Wheat Commission to conduct research and market development activities and provides for the collection of an assessment. The current rate, set each year by the Commission, is five cents per hundredweight, or \$1.00 per ton, to be collected at the first point of sale.

Commission Chairman and Clarksburg wheat grower Larry Hunn stated, "The Commission's Board of Directors is very thankful for the support shown by California wheat growers. We take seriously the responsibility of representing the interests of wheat growers at the state, national, and international level. As the Commission plans for the next five years, supporting research into new and improved wheat varieties with increased resistance to wheat diseases such as Stripe Rust will continue to be a priority. The Commission will also strengthen its market development efforts in local, national and international markets by

emphasizing the excellent quality and nutritional value of California wheat."

The Commission is involved with all segments of the wheat value chain, from wheat breeders and growers, to millers, food companies and consumers. "California wheat is used in many different products, including bread, pasta, tortillas, Asian noodles, and animal feed," explains Janice Cooper, Executive Director. "As trends change, we want to make sure our growers are in a position to understand the changing market and to meet new demand."

Commission Vice-Chairman and Brawley durum grower Roy Motter added, "Growers are invited to contact their local Commission representative or to visit the office and wheat quality laboratory in Woodland, CA. We welcome input from growers as we prepare for our priority-setting board meeting in April. California's wheat crop is diverse. The crop covers about 700,000 acres from the Imperial Valley through the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys and into the intermountain region of Northern California. We produce five classes of wheat under irrigation and non-irrigation practices. In order to be responsive to such a diverse industry, the input of growers is essential."

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for April 9 in Woodland. Details will be posted on our website later this month.

### **Continued Dry Weather Challenging Wheat Crop in Northern and Central California**

Wheat growers throughout the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys are hoping for more rain soon. With the driest January and February on record, farmers are concerned about the crops, including wheat. A storm is forecast to hit later today; hopefully it will bring moisture across a wide area.

### **Farm Advisor Crop Update:**

**Steve Wright, Farm Advisor, Tulare/Kings County**, says: "Overall the wheat crop looks good. However it is considerably shorter than normal. We experienced many days in December and January with frosts and in some cases down to 24 F. As expected, the early fields (October planted) are most affected by the cold temperatures and those that were irrigated up with lagoon water. Fields stayed saturated with poor root growing conditions. We have some of these early planted fields in the boot stage and some starting to head out that are showing portions of the heads being blanks."

**Steve Orloff, Farm Advisor/ County Director, Siskiyou County** provided the following update from the north: "The early planted winter wheat crop in the Intermountain area of Northern California looks great so far, especially compared with last year. The later planted winter wheat fields have not emerged yet. There was plenty of rain after the early plantings to emerge the crop and get it off to a good start, whereas last year much of the crop didn't even come up until late winter when we finally got some rain. So far this year's crop is doing real well and is not stressed for moisture, but hopefully we will receive some precipitation soon. As far as spring plantings, many producers are ahead of schedule. The dry conditions have allowed them to get into the fields sooner than normal and in the warmer lower elevation areas, many fields have already been planted—much ahead of the normal planting date."

**Kent Brittan, Retired Farm Advisor, Yolo/Solano/Sacramento Counties:** "Don't wait, irrigate!"

### **CWC Joins with Raisin Board to Promote Whole Wheat Baking**

The Commission has teamed up with the California Raisin Marketing Board to sponsor a series of baking demonstrations featuring California raisins (as both ingredients and sugar substitute) and stone milled, whole grain flour from California wheat. Award-winning baker **Craig Ponsford** is conducting four half-day sessions in different venues around the state, each reaching a different audience.

The first session was held in February at the Institute of Technology in Clovis, which has a culinary and baking training program. IOT students were joined by food science students from Fresno State to learn new ways to bake delicious and nutritious items including whole grain Walnut-Raisin English Muffins, Morning Buns, Barley-Currant Pretzels, and Cinnamon-Raisin Challah. See our website for more information.

### **Commission Launches Search for New Lab Director**

After more than twenty years of leadership at the Commission's milling and baking quality lab, **Mr. Sam Huang** is ready to retire. The Commission will be launching a search for a new lab director to carry on his excellent program. A full job description will be posted on our website later this week.

### **UC Davis Small Grains Field Day - May 15**

The annual small grains field day will be held at UC Davis on **May 15**, so save the date.

### **In Memoriam**

We note with sadness the passing of local Woodland grain handler **Jon Levine** on February 24, 2013. We will miss seeing him on his daily dog walks past our office, which gave us the opportunity to check in on local affairs.