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2013 Wheat Quality Council Hard Spring Wheat & Durum Tour Completed

Summary by Ben Handcock, Executive Vice President

The Wheat Quality Council hard spring and durum tour was conducted July 22-25 in North Dakota plus parts of South Dakota and Minnesota. **(Tour Map)** There were 74 registered participants this year, and 48 of them were first-timers on this tour.

The 433 spring wheat fields surveyed averaged 44.9 bushels per acre, exactly like last year. The 31 durum fields averaged 41.7 bushels, down slightly from 42.4 bushels last year. We evaluated 8 hard winter fields and they averaged 53.5 bushels, up from 45.8 one year ago.

The average for all 472 field stops (which tied our record high) was 44.8 bushels per acre, exactly like the 44.8 last year. The five year average is 42.56 bushels. (Tour Results)

Day One covered the southern half of North Dakota, southwestern Minnesota and northeast/north central South Dakota. Yields were good on all routes again this year. The highest yielding field was estimated at 88 bushels and the lowest was 10.9, with a day one average of 43.3 bushels versus last year at 42.9 bushels.

Day Two covered northwest and north central North Dakota. We found good durum fields in the far northwest this year and had several durum stops on these routes. The yields were good again as we moved along the routes. We had a spring wheat high for the day of 82.6 bushels, a low of 5.0 with a day two average of 45.1 bushels. Last year these routes averaged 45.5 bushels.

Day Three concluded the tour by covering north central/north east North Dakota and north west/west central Minnesota. We had a huge contingent visiting the ND Mill so fewer stops were made. As is usually the case, this was the highest yielding area of the tour. The day three average was estimated at 49.1 bushels, compared to 48.6 one year ago. Our high was 85.7 and our low was 26.6 bushels per acre.

My personal observations: I thought this was a very good wheat crop. It is not the record breaker of 2009 or 2010, but equals the THIRD highest yield we have ever predicted. The unusual thing about this crop is the lateness of its harvest. Last year we had to stay out of the way of the combines, but not this year. We saw a lot of wheat that had just flowered and some that had not headed. It is a month or more to harvest on some of the later planted acres and 2-3 weeks on a lot more. The only issue this crop could have would be a stretch of very hot weather while filling.

The extended forecast for ND is below average temps for the next 10 days or so and that will be good.

There was very little disease noticed this year. It is fairly simple to see the disease on green wheat, but not very much appeared serious. I also thought the fields were extremely free of weeds. A lot of fields had been sprayed, which accounts for a lot of the lack of weeds and diseases.

Once again our results are not official. The North Dakota Ag Statistics Service will publish official results around August 10. Watch for them and see how we compare. We have been very close for the past ten years or so. We are not as scientific as they are, we simply overwhelm them with the number of fields we visit, and our formula provided by NDSU has been working very well.

Thanks to all of you who came, drove cars or helped in any way to make this tour a success. The newcomers have told me they learned a great deal, had a lot of fun and would love to do it again. We look forward to 2014.

Please mark the Wheat Quality Council 2014 Annual Meeting dates on your calendar. It should be interesting evaluating all the new wheat lines grown this year. The dates are February 18-20 at the Embassy Suites in Kansas City.

The dates for the hard spring and durum tour in 2014 are July 21-24.