



## Winter Wheat East European Regional Yield Trial (WWEERYT)

Winter wheat is one of the most important crops in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Some 5–10 years ago, a well-coordinated network of winter wheat breeders in the region allowed germplasm and information exchange. In some cases joint breeding programs were established between different countries which resulted in the release of superior wheat varieties. The results of the coordinated work were beneficial for all participating institutions and countries since, they allowed the whole community of breeders to use the best genotypes.

The political changes that took place in the region in the 1990s severely disrupted the existing network. At present there is very limited wheat germplasm and information exchange within the region. In the new political and economic environment, many wheat breeding programs in the region lack funds. It seems, however, that there is a great need for cooperation in the region targeted toward more efficient use of wheat germplasm in the new economic environment. For this reason, Oregon State University (USA) and CIMMYT proposed to initiate a Winter Wheat East European Regional Yield Trial (WWEERYT) in 1998. This research effort is funded by the Bureau for Europe and the new Independent States (ENI) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The objectives of the yield trial are to:

1. Promote the exchange of elite winter wheat germplasm within the region as well as with leading wheat breeding programs in the USA.
2. Provide a forum for communication between the breeders participating in the trial through annual meetings, travelling workshops, etc.
3. Monitor the utilization of the introduced germplasm to collect royalties in the case of the release of a genotype introduced through the (WWEERYT) yield trial.

Every participating wheat breeding program may annually submit 2-3 advanced lines or varieties to be included in the trial to the CIMMYT office in Turkey for multiplication. Some programs may choose to participate in the trial without submitting the lines, by growing the nursery and reporting the results. After one year multiplication the trial is assembled in Turkey and shipped to cooperators. It consists of some 50–70, lines including local and international checks. After the data are collected, they are returned to CIMMYT–Turkey for analysis and report preparation. Cooperators meet annually during the growing season to evaluate germplasm performance and discuss the issues related to the trial. The location and the host of the annual meeting are rotated annually to allow visits to different countries and programs. Travelling workshops can also be organized instead of the annual meeting across countries. The institution hosting the annual meeting will serve as a chair of the network for one year. The responsibility for overall coordination of the trial, seed multiplication and distribution, data analysis will be assigned to the CIMMYT office in Turkey.

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