

## Special notes for wheat:

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By: Ernie Flint, Ph.D., CCA, Regional Specialist – Agronomy  
Mississippi State University Extension Service

### Introduction:

As is usually the case, there is a lot of indecision over the planting of wheat. Many things have to be considered if a truly analytical decision is to be made. Any attempt to list them would be incomplete. The only thing that remains is to either take a chance on it the way we do with any crop, or leave it alone. The benefits usually outweigh the negatives, but there are always the options to graze it or destroy it early and gain the value of a cover crop. The fact is that if the seed are not planted you will have a crop of winter weeds that harbor nematodes and no opportunity to generated income in the spring when it is otherwise not available. Given the fact that well managed wheat can yield in the 75 to 100 bushel range I believe it's worth the effort.

### Adaptability:

Some people shy away from wheat here in the Midsouth because they feel it is not well suited to our climate. This is far from the truth since wheat has been a staple crop here since the earliest settlers began farming small patches of land. It is even more proven today as the result of two centuries of selecting and breeding for improved varieties.

### Market and Uses:

We should not grow crops that have questionable marketing opportunities. This is certainly not an issue for wheat since it is readily consumed by the more common routes into the production of breads and other baked goods. An additional and very viable outlet for wheat in this region is as a feed grain in the production of all kinds of animal feeds, especially poultry. A tremendous amount of wheat is also used for wildlife food plots and erosion control.

### So, let's grow some 100 bushel per acre wheat – if weather is ideal.

In this I am going to attempt to outline a step-by-step program from start to finish for producing wheat in Central Mississippi. These are my own ideas resulting from the successes and less-than-successes of the past. This is certainly not the only way, but it's a system that can work well across a broad set of conditions.

**Land:** Stay away from low lying areas unless you want to put up beds and plant on them. Fertility – Soil pH should be 6+ and suitable P and K should be applied for 75 bushel wheat removal. No fall applied N should be required following peanuts, soybeans or corn. If after cotton apply 25 lbs. actual N/ac in the form of ammonium sulfate.

**Planting:** Drill 100 pounds of wheat seed per acre, following a light tillage operation or following a thorough herbicide burndown if not tilled. Drilling at 0.5 to 0.75in depth is preferred. Seeding should be completed preferably by the end of November.

**Variety selection:** Planting a proven variety is extremely important since yield can vary as much as 30 bushels per acre based on this factor only. Refer to the Mississippi Wheat and Oat Variety Trials for this information, or plant a variety known for good performance in your locality.

**Weed Control:** Apply 1.25 oz Zidua per acre after planting. All wheat seed must be covered with soil to avoid damage to germinating seed. Replanting is not an option when this product is used. The reason I have limited my herbicide selection to this product is its wide spectrum of activity including broadleaf species and ryegrass which is our primary weed issue in wheat.

**Spring N:** At first warm period in February apply 100 pounds per acre ammonium sulfate.

Spring Weeds: Scout fields for presence of onions and/or garlic and if found treat with either Harmony or 2,4-D ester. Do this before hollow stem stage or before the joint begins to move in the stem. If you can't scout then spray to make sure you don't have these weeds that can cause heavy dockage at the elevator.

**Diseases:** Treat fields with foliar fungicide as preventative for leaf area loss. (Prosaro, etc.)  
\*Before or at jointing stage apply 150 pounds actual N per acre (250 pounds urea)

**Insects:** Scout weekly and treat as needed for insects (armyworms, etc.)

**Harvest:** Harvest when moisture content reaches 13% or 18% if drying is available.

**Storage:** Treat grain with labeled storage insecticide as it is conveyed into bins.

**In Conclusion:**

This is the simplified version of a story that can get very complex. For now let's keep it simple. If you want the complex version I can send you that too or we can visit as the crop progresses. But it probably will not change the outcome very much at all.

Thanks for your time.