

Project Title: **Maritime Organic Bread Wheat Project 2002**
Organization: **Maritime Organic Growers Co-operative**
Project coordinator: **Jennifer Scott**

Highlights

We are pleased that the first commercial crops of Acadia and Selkirk wheat have been harvested! Since the Acadia has already been tested for baking quality, it is now for sale in the region. The catalogue advertising the Acadia wheat (attached) was published September 1, 2002. Since then many orders have been placed for this special wheat. Interest in the heritage wheats was generated by word of mouth, the catalogue, and an article published in Rural Delivery, a regional publication (article attached).

We have also provided seeds and information to the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, and they are helping us by increasing our Red Fife seed supply. A network of farmers throughout the three Maritime Provinces are growing out the rest of the seeds. Each farmer has agreed to 'take care' of their variety, and provide seed to other farmers who request it.

This year Dr. David Patriquin of Dalhousie University became interested in the heritage wheat for organic production. Dr. Patriquin worked with Jennifer Scott and Sarah Evans to conduct detailed observations of 4 heritage and one modern wheat, in replicated plots. He also made a digital video to introduce the work in the Maritimes to other interested farmers and researchers. Dr. Patriquin brought an initial version to the IFOAM meeting (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) held in August, 2002 in Victoria, British Columbia.

We still wish to do some horizontal resistance selection with several heritage varieties including Acadia, Selkirk, Red Fife, Coteau, and two newer wheats, Roblin and Barrie. Our continued goal is to select the best specimens from our present population of heritage varieties, and possibly cross them, each time selecting for horizontal disease resistance. This initiative would require continued financial support, but now that a potential market is established, and we have solid links with both Dalhousie University and the Organic Agriculture Centre, it will be easier to find funding partners and technical assistance.

We are also presently looking into the idea of establishing an Ecological Heritage Wheat Centre on the Hants Shore of Nova Scotia. This location is ideal because it is a proven wheat production area, it has a high density of organic farms in the area, and there are no genetically-modified or contaminated sites nearby. The site we are considering would also be of interest to the Nature Conservancy because of its value to local biodiversity.

Report on work done to date

- Sending seeds to farmers for grow-outs

- Honourariums for farmers who take time and field space to grow out our saved heritage wheat varieties (starting in 2002). Four farmers grew out wheat for seed in 2001. Six growers participated in 2002.
- Honourariums for bakers who take time and income loss related to testing the selected heritage wheat varieties Acadia and Selkirk. Three bakeries have tested Acadia wheat (two in Nova Scotia and one in New Brunswick). We expect four bakeries to take part in testing in the fall of 2002, with the addition of one bakery in PEI and one more heritage variety of wheat (Selkirk). The testing involves baking separate loaves of bread, handing them out to customers (some with wheat sensitivities) for free, and getting those customers to give them honest feedback verbally or on written questionnaires.
- Co-ordination expenses (travel, phone calls, shipping costs, time) for making sure the seeds get planted, the wheat gets tested, and the results get distributed.
- We have plans to purchase used pieces of equipment for field plot tests. We have a promising contact in Alberta who is scouting for used equipment for us.
- Expenses related to writing an article to explain the importance of the heritage wheat work and its results to the general public.

Maritime Certified Organic Growers Co-operative (MCOG)

A non-profit certification organization for the Maritimes

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