

October 13, 2001

To: MCOG members
From: Jennifer Scott
Regarding: Heritage wheat work

MCOG needs to decide the future direction of a project started in 1998 to help growers interested in growing bread wheat.

As some of you know, in 1998 and 1999 MCOG co-operated with the NBDARD to select promising bread wheat varieties for organic production on organic farms. During those two years I worked with a number of MCOG growers to compare modern varieties, varieties preferred by other organic growers, and heritage varieties. Our goal was to test yield, quality, and baking quality.

In 2000, with a small sum (\$1000), a number of people offered to keep growing the most promising heritage varieties in order to increase the seed to commercial amounts. Stu grew the Acadia, John McLaughlan grew Selkirk, and the NSAC grew the rest.

In 2001, Stu kept the Acadia going, John grew Selkirk, Gary Clauseheide grew Park, and Roger Henry grew the Red Fife. All turned out well except the Park. Larry Slipp has offered to grow the Coteau. All of these wheats have very promising quality characteristics, but they need to be tested some more by bakers. Acadia will be tested more extensively this winter.

I would like to emphasize that we have the most unique and extensive collection of heritage wheat in Canada and likely in the United States. I have been getting inquiries about our work from Canadian, US, and European (Dutch and Italian) wheat growers and breeders. Maine growers and bakers have come to our workshops and field days.

The Weston Foundation has provided us with grants totaling \$6,500 (\$500 is already allocated). We need to decide what to do with the money, and - more importantly - what to do with the wheat that has been grown out. I'm not sure I can continue to store and ship all this seed unless I build another grain bin...

Here is what I suggest:

We need volunteers to keep growing out the seed. Each grower who volunteers, I think, could get an honourarium (or an amount per acre). These growers could make seed available to other interested growers. They could also make it available to bakers who want to try it out. The bakers, in turn, could also get an honourarium for their effort.

My commitment is to store seed for one more year, and complete an article with lots of background information on the wheats by the end of October.

The wheats I would recommend we keep are:

Acadia, Selkirk, Coteau, Red Fife

I also have Roblin here if anyone wants it.. It is quite hard to get now, and should be kept going...

Please think these suggestions over and come to the AGM with your ideas.