On-Farm Cereal Variety and Advanced Breeding Line Testing across Montana for Environment Specific Cultivar Recommendations:

Durum Wheat Off-Station Variety Performance, Chester, MT

Principal Investigator:

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Project Personnel:

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Cooperator:

Kurt Kammerzell, Landowner, Chester

Objectives:

Commercially available durum varieties and advanced breeding lines were evaluated for agronomic performance and fit at on-farm locations across the state of Montana. Sites chosen for the research considered the environment, growing conditions and soil types, and represent the major land areas for producers in those regions served by Northern Agricultural Research Center. The Liberty County location near Chester entered its twelfth year of durum testing in crop year 2025.

Methods:

The uniform off-station durum variety performance trial was seeded into chemical fallow ground during 2025. The trial consisted of 12 entries seeded in replicated, three-row, 22-foot plots on a 12-inch row spacing, utilizing a self-propelled cone seeder with Atom Jet paired row openers. All plots were trimmed to a harvest length of approximately 17 feet with a three-point rototiller. Plant height was measured from the soil surface to the top of the head, excluding awns, and percent sawfly cutting was visually estimated for each plot immediately prior to harvest. A 'Wintersteiger' small plot combine, funded in part by the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee, was used to harvest each three-row plot. Prior to measuring plot weight for yield determination, seed was either cleaned or weighed in-dirt as per protocols. Protein, test weight, and moisture content were determined on a clean sample using a Foss Infratec 1241 near infrared analyzer. Other variables specific to each individual trial are listed with the current year's data tables.

Please note that research trial seed yield results recorded under wheat stem sawfly pressure are likely much higher than a producer should expect. Small plot variety trials are managed to assess maximum yield potential and are harvested in such a way that all stems and heads are picked up by the combine, regardless of lodging or cutting due to wheat stem sawfly. Pickup guards coupled with an exceptionally slow ground speed and a low cutting height help researchers collect all heads in order to assess seed yield potential. If you are a producer in a wheat stem sawfly environment, although hollow stemmed

varieties may be high yielding in research trials in your area, we strongly recommend against growing those hollow stemmed varieties. Please be aware that if you seed hollow stemmed varieties with wheat stem sawfly present, you are only creating a breeding ground for future generations of sawfly in your area and not helping combat the pest population.

Results:

This report contains both single-year and long-term data summaries limited to the most recent ten years. It should be noted that the 2025 data table in this report represents varietal performance for a single crop year at a single location, therefore cannot be considered representative of performance expected when differing conditions due to location, year and management are imposed. By itself, 2025 data shall not constitute in any form a recommendation for or against any variety or breeding line included.

Durum seed yields at Chester averaged 39 bu/ac (Table 1). 'MT Blackbeard' produced the highest seed yield at nearly 45 bu/ac. Montana State University breeding line 'MTD19011' was the only entry to produce a seed yield statistically equal to that of MT Blackbeard. Test weights of all durum entries for this site averaged just under 58 lb./bu. Very minimal wheat stem sawfly cutting was observed in the trial. Yield, test weight, protein, plant height, and sawfly cutting data for the 2025 Chester dryland spring wheat trial are summarized in Table 1.

Comparable averages are calculated using a standard check variety when not all entries are present in a specific trial for all years. Variety means are adjusted by multiplying the actual check mean by the ratio of the individual variety mean compared to the check mean for the same years as tested. All varieties are then directly comparable to each other when in the same nursery. A minimum of three years of data is necessary to be included in the comparable average calculation. Nine-year comparable averages (2016-2025) for durum seed yield and test weight at Chester are summarized in Table 2, while nine-year comparable averages for protein content and wheat stem sawfly cutting are summarized in Table 3. Based on the comparable average calculations, 'Alzada', 'MT Blackbeard', 'WB18148', 'Mountrail', and 'MT Raska' are the highest yielding varieties in Chester.

Summary:

Upon establishment, the Chester site had very good stand uniformity. Season-long precipitation was limited, however timely rains during tillering and during grain fill resulted in improved seed yields and test weights compared to 2024.

This work has been strongly supported by producers in the Chester area, and by the Northern Agricultural Research Center Advisory Board. With budget and other resources allowing, it is planned to continue off-station spring wheat variety and breeding line testing in this area. The Chester location was reestablished in 2014 following a prolonged absence of uniform off-station spring cereal testing in Liberty County.

Recognition:

This research would not have been possible without the assistance of the following seasonal employees: David Bischoff, Baylor Davis, Ty Golie, Simone Gomes, Brady Kueffler, Lirio McKenzie, Teresa Miller, Jason Rice, and Lily Smith.

TABLE 1. Dryland Fallow Spring Durum Cultivar Evaluation Nursery Grown Off-Station at the Kammerzell Farm, Chester. Northern Agricultural Research Center. Havre, Montana. 2025. (Exp# 25-9853-DUR)

ID	1/ YIELD bu/ac	TEST WT lb/bu	2/ PROTEIN %	PLNT HT inches	3/ SAWFLY %
AAC Stronghold	36.5	**58.4**	**17.5**	28.0	0.0
Alzada	40.4	57.6	16.3	26.7	0.0
CDC Defy	37.4	57.8	**17.1**	**30.4**	0.3
Divide	40.8	58.0	16.1	29.4	0.7
Joppa	35.9	57.0	**17.1**	29.7	2.0
Lustre	37.7	56.7	16.8	29.9	0.3
MT Blackbeard	**44.8**	**58.9**	16.3	**32.1**	0.7
MT Raska	36.8	**58.8**	**17.2**	23.3	0.7
ND Riveland	36.9	58.0	**17.2**	**31.2**	0.7
ND Stanley	38.7	**58.4**	**17.0**	28.1	0.3
MTD19011	**42.6**	57.8	16.7	29.6	0.3
MTD19241	39.5	57.5	**17.1**	27.9	0.0
EXPERIMENTAL MEANS	39.0	57.9	16.9	28.9	0.5
LSD (0.05)	3.0	0.7	0.6	1.7	-
C.V.%	4.5	0.7	2.2	3.6	-
P-VALUE (Varieties)	<.0001	<.0001	0.0024	<.0001	NS

1/ Volumetric yields are based on plot weights adjusted to uniform 13 percent grain moisture and 60 lbs/bu as the standard test weight for durum.

2/ Protein values are adjusted to 13 percent grain moisture.

3/ Sawfly rating is reported as the percentage of cut stems.

Bold indicates the highest or lowest value within a column (whichever is most desirable for the specific characteristic).
Bold indicates values equal to the underlined value within a column based on Fisher's protected LSD (P=0.05).
NS for non-significant replaces the LSD when the probability value (P-Value) exceeds 0.05.

Management Information (25-9853-DUR)

Seeding Date:	April 15, 2025
Harvest Date:	August 26, 2025
Fertility:	68-14-7-7 side banded
System:	No Till
Herbicide:	n/a
Insecticide:	n/a
Previous Crop:	Chemical Fallow-Spring Wheat
Precipitation:	5.66" seeding to harvest maturity

TABLE 2. Nine-Year Yield and Test Weight Summary on Selected Entries from Dryland Fallow Spring Durum Variety Nurseries Grown Off-Station at the Kammerzell Farm, Chester. Northern Agricultural Research Center. Havre, Montana. 2016-2025 (Exp# 9853-DUR)

		[1/] YIELD (Bushels Per Acre)								TEST WEIGHT (Pounds Per Bushel)							
[2/] VARIETY	[3/] No. of YEARS TESTED	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	[3/] AVE. for YEARS TESTED	[4/] % of CHECK YIELD	[5/] **9-YR COMP. AVE. YIELD**	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	[3/] AVE. for YEARS TESTED	[4/] % of CHECK TEST WT	[5/] **9-YR COMP. AVE. TEST WT**
ALZADA (P+)	8		25.3	46.4	28.4	40.4	38.6	100.0	**38.6**		56.9	55.3	53.6	57.6	55.6	100.0	**55.6**
MT BLACKBEARD (+)	4	26.3	25.7	40.8	29.5	44.8	33.4	95.1	**36.7**	57.4	54.7	54.1	52.6	58.9	55.5	99.4	**55.3**
WB8148	3		26.5	42.4	26.3		31.7	95.0	**36.7**		55.6	55.3	53.6		54.8	99.2	**55.2**
MOUNTRAIL (+)	10	22.3	27.9	49.5	26.2		34.1	92.2	**35.6**	55.4	55.7	56.5	53.5		55.3	99.8	**55.5**
MT RASKA (+)	4	28.4	28.0	45.6	23.2	36.8	32.4	92.2	**35.6**	58.7	57.9	55.6	55.2	58.8	57.2	102.4	**57.0**
DIVIDE (+)	10	24.6	25.9	42.2	27.1	40.8	34.1	88.3	**34.1**	56.3	56.9	57.1	53.6	58.0	56.5	101.6	**56.5**
JOPPA (+)	10	22.4	24.8	46.0	25.9	35.9	33.4	86.3	**33.3**	56.4	56.5	56.0	53.3	57.0	56.0	100.7	**56.0**
ND-RIVELAND (+)	6	24.0	27.1	43.9	24.0	36.9	36.2	85.8	**33.1**	56.8	55.5	54.9	52.2	58.0	55.8	100.8	**56.1**
TIOGA (+)	9	20.2	22.1		21.4		30.5	85.0	**32.8**	56.1	55.4		52.9		56.1	101.0	**56.2**
LUSTRE (+)	7	21.1	21.8	42.3	22.6	37.7	33.7	82.0	**31.7**	55.0	54.5	55.1	52.4	56.7	55.1	98.2	**54.6**
CARPIO (+)	10	23.2	23.2	38.5	26.1		30.0	81.0	**31.3**	54.4	55.2	53.1	51.3		54.6	98.3	**54.7**
ND-GRANO (+)	5	22.1	26.3	43.1			37.4	80.9	**31.2**	56.1	55.2	55.1			55.9	98.6	**54.8**
MEANS (For Entries Listed)		23.9	25.1	43.7	25.5	39.0			**34.2**	56.2	55.8	55.3	53.1	57.9			**55.6**
[6/] Growing Season Precipitation (in.)		n/a	5.00	5.10	4.99	5.66	5.19										
Soil PAW (in.) to SD @ Planting		12.70	9.10	4.70	n/a	8.97	8.87										
Total Plant Available Water (in.)		n/a	14.10	9.80	n/a	14.63	12.87										
Soil NO3 (lbs.) to SD at Planting		197	276	142	n/a	292	227										
SD (Sampling Depth in Inches)		48	48	45	n/a	48	47										
Fertilizer Applied	(# N)	100	46	46	68	68	71										
	(# P_2O_5)	20	9	9	14	14	14										
	(# K_2O)	10	5	5	7	7	7										
	(# S)	10	5	5	7	7	7										

Check variety is Alzada.

1/ See MCES Bulletin 1093 or the Plant Sciences & Plant Pathology website at http://plantsciences.montana.edu/ for evaluation of other important variety performance characteristics to include protein, quality, disease resistance, etc. before making cultivar selecton decisions.

2/ P = Private Variety, + = Protected Variety, ++ = PVP Title 5 Pending.

3/ Only the most recent 5 years shown, but summary calculations include all years noted.

4/ Percent of Alzada yield or test weight for the same data years as those in which a given entry was tested.

5/ 9-Yr Comparable Average = (x/y) * z where x = average yield or test weight rating for Alzada for the same years, and z = 9-Yr average yield or test weight for the check variety Alzada.

6/ Seeding to 14 days prior to harvest.

TABLE 3. Nine-Year Protein and Sawfly Summary on Selected Entries from Dryland Fallow Spring Durum Variety Nurseries Grown Off-Station at the Kammerzell Farm, Chester. Northern Agricultural Research Center. Havre, Montana. 2016-2025 (Exp# 9853-DUR)

		[1/] PROTEIN % (Adjusted to 13% grain moisture)								SAWFLY RATING (% of cut and lodged stems)							
2/ VARIETY or SELECTION	[3/] No. of YEARS TESTED	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	[3/] AVE. for YEARS TESTED	[4/] % of CHECK PROTEIN	[5/] 9-YR COMP. AVE. PROTEIN	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	[3/] AVE. for YEARS TESTED	[4/] % of CHECK SAWFLY	[5/] 9-YR COMP. AVE. SAWFLY
WB8148	3		17.2	18.4	18.4		18.0	104.9	**17.8**		0.3	0.7	0.0		0.3	60.0	**0.6**
DIVIDE (+)	10	16.7	16.9	17.9	18.7	16.1	17.1	100.6	**17.1**	1.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.9	83.6	**0.9**
LUSTRE (+)	7	17.6	18.2	19.3	18.8	16.8	17.9	107.2	**18.2**	1.0	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.9	91.8	**1.0**
MT RASKA (+)	4	16.4	17.3	19.0	18.2	17.2	17.6	103.9	**17.7**	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.4	95.9	**1.0**
CARPIO (+)	10	17.1	17.1	18.6	18.9		17.7	103.4	**17.6**	0.7	0.7	0.3	1.0		1.0	96.6	**1.0**
ALZADA (P+)	8		16.5	17.5	17.6	16.3	17.0	100.0	**17.0**		0.7	0.7	0.3	0.0	1.1	100.0	**1.1**
MOUNTRAIL (+)	10	17.1	16.8	18.8	19.2		17.8	103.5	**17.6**	5.3	0.7	0.3	1.0		2.1	194.8	**2.1**
TIOGA (+)	9	17.4	17.6		19.5		17.8	104.2	**17.7**	5.3	0.7		0.7		2.8	232.8	**2.5**
JOPPA (+)	10	16.9	16.9	18.3	18.2	17.1	17.3	101.4	**17.3**	5.3	0.7	0.0	1.0	2.0	2.6	243.1	**2.6**
ND-RIVELAND (+)	6	16.9	17.1	18.3	18.6	17.2	17.5	104.7	**17.8**	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.7	2.2	269.2	**2.8**
ND-GRANO (+)	5	16.8	17.8	19.8			17.9	107.9	**18.4**	10.0	1.0	0.0			3.7	319.9	**3.4**
MT BLACKBEARD (+)	4	16.2	16.8	18.1	18.8	16.3	17.2	101.7	**17.3**	2.3	0.0	0.7	3.7	0.7	1.5	351.7	**3.7**
MEANS (For Entries Listed)		16.8	17.3	18.5	18.6	16.7			**17.6**	3.3	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.7			**1.8**
[6/] Growing Season Precipitation (in.)		n/a	5.00	5.10	4.99	5.66	5.19										
Soil PAW (in.) to SD @ Planting		12.70	9.10	4.70	n/a	8.97	8.87										
Total Plant Available Water (in.)		n/a	14.10	9.80	n/a	14.63	12.87										
Soil NO3 (lbs.) to SD at Planting		197	276	142	n/a	292	227										
SD (Sampling Depth in Inches)		48	48	45	n/a	48	47										
Fertilizer Applied	(# N)	100	46	46	68	68	71										
	(# P_2O_5)	20	9	9	14	14	14										
	(# K_2O)	10	5	5	7	7	7										
	(# S)	10	5	5	7	7	7										

Check variety Alzada.

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2/ P = Private Variety, + = Protected Variety, ++ = PVP Title 5 Pending.

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4/ Percent of Alzada protein or sawfly rating for the same data years as those in which a given entry was tested.

5/ 9-Yr Comparable Average = (x/y) * z where x = average protein or sawfly rating for Alzada for the same years, and z = 9-Yr average protein or sawfly rating for the check variety Alzada.

6/ Seeding to 14 days prior to harvest.