The Whole Grain Connection

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**A Wheat Seed Story**

            Farmers need good seed to grow good crops. We all know this instinctively. But in the 20 years since the *Whole Grain Connection* began selling wheat seed in California, some farmers have been acting otherwise; I have to say, usually by accident. So, I’ll say it again, farmers need good seed to grow good crops.

            In recognition of our human nature, we the people have put in place the *California Crop Improvement Association* to provide third party seed inspection, and the *California Department of Food & Agriculture* certifies Seed Sellers. Similarly, organic farmers have a third-party check through the *California Certified Organic Farmers*and other organicprograms. It is through these programs that we can take care of our heritage seed (our non-proprietary, out-of-patent seed). The caveat is, provided that we participate! The most basic suggestion is to engage with CCIA in the *heritage seed quality assurance program*when growing heritage wheat. In this way the grower can assure their buyers that the crop is pure and is indeed what the label says it is. By the way, the words *certified seed*have been reserved for modern proprietary seed verification i.e. for patented*Plant Variety Protected*novelty seeds.

            Since 2000, the *Whole Grain Connection* has been selling selected heritage (non-proprietary) wheat seed in amounts such that a farmer can directly use their full-scale equipment. The *WGC* has also endeavored to help beginning wheat farmers to consider all the steps needed from planting, to final marketing. The varieties sold by WGC have been selected to be suited to most of the climate zones in California, some are especially drought tolerant. Specifically, these varieties predate 1900 and the refined flour milling system, so that they have a history of use for whole grain foods. They can be grown without irrigation by careful choice of planting time to capture the available rainfall and yet avoid flooding. Generally, they are tall, large rooted and tiller well and so need to be planted at a much lower density than modern varieties. Lodging can result from a combination of dense planting, high soil fertility and high soil moisture. Yields in lean conditions are often less than half those seen for modern conventional wheat.  Exceptions arise when the location and season are particularly favorable. The reduced yield is compensated for economically, by the reduced inputs compared with conventional wheat farming.

*Modern conventional wheat is short in stature, densely planted and grown with the use of herbicides, extra fertilization and irrigation. In this way fairly consistent and high yields are obtained.*

The WGC sells the following wheat seed in 25 pound bags:

**White wheat**

Sonora, Wit Wolkoring, Foisy, Chiddam Blanc de Mars, India-Jammu

**Turgidum wheat**

Durum-Iraq, Blue Beard Durum, Ethiopian Blue Tinge (purple durum),

Maparcha, Akmolinka

**Spanish spring spelt wheat**

Silanes

**Swiss winter spelt wheat**

Stalden

Other varieties of current interest at WGC and in need of further propagation to farmer amounts are as follows:

**Spanish spring spelt**

Oviedo, La Pola, Asturien

**Spanish winter emmer**

Escandia

More details about all these varieties can be found at [www.wholegrainconnection,org](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001RgHI2LNEjVnK5xTaxeN3ZKrNCHz2Gjj5PRJNNQkciBilSUG4rC0hdO2yRsOmy117DbJcivIyH3agDLz8Q4KwlBotFJ6ksV0phYRATDDSGtw-3jhi8Xvd6xHKRV7XJz0c2ICuFSr5iYsdUR3oFwmUmMFNemsPf5FcGOBFFMPj2Ws=&c=3_DxusdpV-g1t8u_sjtiKIWkT7KnbQHL_XTLLU2A0geAZeOpuaKLnA==&ch=DLw3StpexLCBD_liYIRj38XberREPsS-1PQKjAPGRsbhrZm6mp0JJQ==) or by contacting [Monica Spiller](mailto:barmbaker@aol.com).

[A California Whole Grain Initiative](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001RgHI2LNEjVnK5xTaxeN3ZKrNCHz2Gjj5PRJNNQkciBilSUG4rC0hdO2yRsOmy117OhHWLWfdQaX_24IcB6V5dJBcuGJKoTyaU0sd__9BOSDhRAqPpUBUIoN1m1xTVK5Fr1AS5PNXpcUOqSmOHCdN2mA8dezFCOp5JGnfRBitL-E=&c=3_DxusdpV-g1t8u_sjtiKIWkT7KnbQHL_XTLLU2A0geAZeOpuaKLnA==&ch=DLw3StpexLCBD_liYIRj38XberREPsS-1PQKjAPGRsbhrZm6mp0JJQ==)

This is a call to action by the *Whole Grain Connection*to encourage an increase in the available **genuine whole grain foods**!

We have two pandemics raging: covid-19 and metabolic disease! Pandemics are worldwide epidemics!  Metabolic disease describes the spectrum of diseases including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancers that result from basing the diet on confections (refined grains and refined sugar).

If we did not have the metabolic disease pandemic, many fewer people would be hospitalized or die from covid-19 infection.

The irony is that we know exactly how to practically prevent metabolic disease; it is to **base the diet on genuine whole grain foods,**instead of confections.

In Africa except for South Africa, the death-rate from covid-19 is amazingly low; those most likely to die are still those suffering from diabetes. However, the rate for diabetes in African countries, where they are much less likely to be eating refined grains or refined sugar, is much lower than in the USA. [Read more.](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001RgHI2LNEjVnK5xTaxeN3ZKrNCHz2Gjj5PRJNNQkciBilSUG4rC0hdO2yRsOmy11737L6F22VngJJ_MBpMa8m6ZVrkPMmd2s3gYJrw7R1FWgiMr6HUw-ndRr2zMdBA7Bf8EW_ZAKLw3nb0FX2-cQS5_K1rHqlCjlGIeUEbf6EK6p7GBO9MZh_KzjH_b6e_vdCUmPke7eElG4=&c=3_DxusdpV-g1t8u_sjtiKIWkT7KnbQHL_XTLLU2A0geAZeOpuaKLnA==&ch=DLw3StpexLCBD_liYIRj38XberREPsS-1PQKjAPGRsbhrZm6mp0JJQ==)

Aided by the refined flour millers and the refined sugar industry most bakers are actually confectioners! Indeed, this seems to be what they want to be. However, people need to be able to find and eat **genuine whole grain foods!**

Hence our *California Whole Grain Initiative*: to encourage an **increased supply of basic whole grain foods**, enough for everyone, and made genuinely with all the grain ingredients in the whole grain form and without refined carbohydrates. **The absolute stumbling block to achieving this is in the lack of supply of whole wheat flour, brown rice and whole corn.**

There are bakers who will object to this call to action, but I believe there are many others like me, who have long wanted to eat **genuine whole grain breads** baked for them and have long ago given up looking! Downtown and corner bakers and commercial bakers were never producing the **genuine whole grain** breads that I wanted. Instead I learned to make my own bread. Also, if I want a sweet pie, pastry, cake or cookie, I make my own. In this way, I have no trouble at all avoiding refined flour and refined sugar. The result has been that I do not visit baker’s shops for baked goods.  I should add that because of the *Whole Grain Connection* enterprise I certainly do visit bakeries, but only when I’m on a mission to see and taste their ***genuine whole grain***offerings. What’s more I believe that there are many who are like me in this view of bakeries, as selling sweets rather than basic grain foods. The same applies to restaurants. Eating in a restaurant loses much of its appeal when zero **genuine whole grain bread** is offered. Bakers complain that even when they have a whole grain bread for sale that it does not sell! Well, the explanation is that most customers of bakeries and restaurants, are the ones looking only for refined and sweet goods. People like me who would have wanted a whole grain loaf baked for them walk by, because by now they do not expect a whole grain loaf, brown rice or whole corn tortilla to be available!

So, if you are a baker or restaurant owner wanting to introduce a genuine whole grain loaf, brown rice, or whole corn products. Bravo! But it will be essential that you **ADVERTISE YOUR GENUINE WHOLE GRAIN LOAVES, CROISSANTS AND MORE**, with all grain ingredients whole grain and without added refined sugar. Hopefully, then you will bring in a flood of new customers who previously walked by, as well as provide novelty for your current sweet tooth customers.

Here’s hoping you will find some particular aspect of this initiative to pursue in your own life or for your own enterprise. Certainly, this can only be a joint effort; we are all in this together. *E Pluribus Unum*.