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JOHN G. ANNESSER, Tilbury, Ont.

Soft or Pie-Bald Wheat.

(Experimental Farms Note.)

It is well known that, when grown on certain soils and especially in certain seasons, wheat instead of being dark and translucent, is pale or spotted with patches of light color. If this condition is very marked the wheat is called "soft". and if it is less evident the term "piebald" is often used. In Kansas and some other States the phrase "yellow berry" is employed to designate the same condition. There is considerable misapprehension in regard to softness in wheat. Some varieties, such as Prelude for instance, are extra hard in their nature and very seldom produce soft kernels, while others, such as White Russian, are essentially softer. But most of the popular sorts, though usually hard in character, become soft under special conditions of soil and climate. Even the extra hard wheats of the Durum class, such as Wild Goose, sometimes show softness.

Soft kernels of wheat contain a lower proportion of gluten and a higher proportion of starch. The interior of a hard kernel is horny and translucent, while the interior of a soft kernel is whitish and opaque. As bran also is translucent, the soft kernels are paler than the hard ones. The bran itself, however, does not change color when the wheat becomes soft and the term "yellow berry" is quite misleading. A soft sample of a so-called red wheat (which is really reddish-brown, rather than red, in color) is not yellowish but pale reddish-brown. The popular idea that Red Fife wheat turns into White Fife when it becomes soft is entirely erroneous: the difference between these two varieties lies only in the color of the bran. White Fife is just as hard a wheat as Red Fife though of a different color; yellowish rather than reddish.

Softness is the outcome of peculiar soil conditions especially in regard to soil structure and the quantity of moisture present. Land from which trees have recently been cleared is particularly liable to produce soft wheat. It is also well established that in countries where the summer is rather long and where the temperatures are moderate the wheat is usually softer than in districts where the summer is short and where great extremes of temperature occur. A full explanation of the causes of softness has not yet been arrived at.

It is generally believed that soft wheat is inferior in quality to hard wheat for bread making; this is usually true, provided the samples compared belong to the same variety. However, some soft varieties are superior to some hard ones. For milling purposes hard wheat is preferred as it is easier to handle and it usually gives better satisfaction to bakers who desire to make extremely light bread. For pastry and cake, flour from soft wheat is better. Hard wheat being more in demand usually brings a higher price than soft wheat. As a rule, therefore, farmers whose wheat is soft suffer a financial loss on that account. Such wheat, however, (if of a usually hard variety) is perfectly good for seed purposes, because the softness is not inherited

Not very much is yet known as to the best way to overcome the tendency of any s il o produce soft wheat. To a certain extent this is doubtless beyond control, but it appears probable that cultivation and especially the plowing under of sod will, in time, tend to bring about such a condition of soil as will produce harder wheat. This could be expected particularly if the land under tillage were formerly covered with trees. - C. E. Saunders, Dominion Cerealist.

The jurors filed into the jury box, and after all the twelve seats were filled there still remained one juror standing

"If the Court please," said the clerk, "they have made a mistake and sent us thirteen jurors instead of twelve. What do you want to do with this extra

judge of the extra man, "Joseph A. Braines," he replied, "Mr. Clerk," said the judge, "take this man back to the jury remaissioners, and tell them we don't need him, as we already have here twelve men without Braines."—"Tit-Bits."

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