

When to Cut the Wheat Crop

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matured. If the crop had been cut under these conditions when the straw was ripe at the first joint, the shrinkage of the grain would have been rapid and the weight and grade would have been lowered. On such seasons it is best to allow the crop to stand longer to allow the berry to continue development. The reverse of this condition was the case in 1916. The straw was very green and full of sap, and cutting could have taken place much sooner and the development of the grain carried on in the stock.

There is a proper time to cut the wheat crops to secure the best quality both in quality and the weight of the grain, and there is also a time when it may be cut to lower the quality and weight and grade. There is no necessity for any haphazard methods or guess work. In the past there has been much discussion as to the reason or cause of spotted wheat or in other words piebald grain. There are several reasons for this. Grain left standing until over-ripe will show starch, piebald grain. Hot dry weather causing undue ripening of the crops is another cause. Grain cut on the green side does not show very piebald grain to any extent. We often use the expression: "To have the best colored heavy weighting grain it must be cut on the green side with respect to the straw." But there must be some understanding of this matter to secure the best results. The crop may be cut too green or while the straw has a decided green tinge and the grain may shrink more or less. On the other hand the straw when cut may be quite green or have a tinge of green as in the above case, and still may yield fine, plump, heavy grain. In such a case as I have pointed out one cannot determine by the straw alone but must also consider the condition of the berry at the time the crop is cut. We hear some growers recommend cutting wheat on the green side, while others condemn. One may have cut when the crop was green and secured a fine sample of wheat. The other may have done likewise and found the grain badly shrunken. In both cases it may have been just guess work and in another season conditions might prove different.

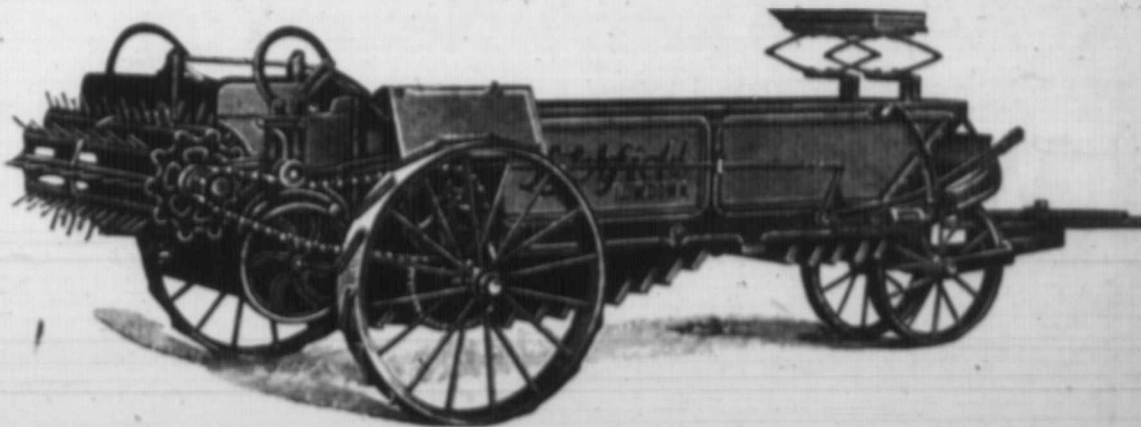
The only safe guide is to cut the crop according to the condition of the berry regardless of the color of the straw. These are very important points to observe and should be studied by every wheat grower.

Determining When To Cut

The observant grower will know that when the berry is filling it is of a green shade or color, and as the maturing process goes on, it changes into what is termed the milk stage. At this time, if the crop is in a healthy condition, the milk will be of a clear, white, milky color. As development of the berry is carried on it loses this milky character and goes into the soft-dough stage. Later on the berry enters the firm-dough stage. As the ripening process goes on it changes into the ripe stage. If the grain is left uncut it goes into a hard, flinty condition as we know it when it is fully ripened and hardened. These different processes may be observed by the grower by a close examination of the berry. If, when squeezed between the fingers and thumb it shows any milky substance, it is not yet fit to cut. After the milk stage is passed it will be found by squeezing the berry that a very small drop of water which ought to be clear with no milky substance will squeeze out at the end of the berry and the berry will be found firm. At this stage, if the season is late, it may be advisable to cut the crop, but not before. If it is still early in the season it may be left standing until this drop of clear water has disappeared after which the crop may be safely harvested.

To be more sure as to the right conditions for cutting the smooth side of the berry should show an amber or yellow tinge spreading over it. In some cases this development is carried on until the berry is a creamy white color and the green color disappears. Whether to cut the crop at the time the berry still has the small drop of water with the spot of yellow showing on it or

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