

## WHEAT

Anthropologists speculate that primitive man probably first chewed the raw wheat kernel before learning to grind it into flour and mixing it with water to make porridge. About 10,000 years B.C., man first started eating a crude form of flat bread – a baked combination of flour and water. Ancient Egyptians are believed to be the first to bake white, leavened bread, as we know it today.

Now, all over the world, wheat makes an outstanding contribution to the human diet. Wheat foods such as bread, pasta and cereal are low in fat and high in complex carbohydrates, providing long-lasting energy. They are excellent sources of vitamins, including vitamins E, the B vitamins, iron, zinc and folic acid. Wheat foods are a good source of soluble and insoluble fiber. Foods rich in fiber provide many health benefits, and whole-wheat products satisfy appetites with few calories.

Washington wheat farmers grow five classes of wheat. Every class has different end-use characteristics. The protein content, bran coat color, milling and baking qualities all determine the most suitable end uses for each type of wheat.

Per acre, no state can match Washington's abundant wheat production. Washington wheat farms produce almost one-half the amount of grain that No. 1-ranked Kansas produces. But they manage to do it on one-third of the acres.

Harvested wheat is taken by the farmer's grain trucks to on-farm storage or nearby commercial grain elevators. After the wheat is sold, it is transferred by truck to regional rail- or barge-loading facilities. More than 60 percent of Washington's wheat exports ultimately travel by barge from ports along the 400-mile Snake-Columbia river system to the Portland Oregon area export terminals.

About 36 percent of the wheat is eventually transported by rail to coastal grain terminals. From these seaport terminals, grain is loaded onto ocean freighters and exported to nations around the world.

The Washington Grain Commission strives to keep the public, wheat producers, warehouse companies, government officials and our valued international customers informed about issues of importance to the wheat industry. Some events, educational materials and organizations funded in whole or part by the WGC include:

- Pacific Northwest Wheat Export Tour & Wheat Quality Workshop
- Wheat Quality Workshop at the Western Wheat Quality Laboratory
- Pacific Northwest Farm Forum
- Transportation Studies
- Informing media outlets about relevant grain-related issues
- Marketing Outlook
- Legislative Aide Tour
- WGA Web Site
- Washington Wheat Facts
- Wheat Week
- A.W.A.R.E
- Home Baking Association
- Wheat Foods Council