

## Answers to Common Questions about Triticale

### What is triticale?

Triticale (*trit-ah-kay-lee*) is a close relative of wheat that results from pollinating durum wheat with rye pollen, then using that cross in a breeding program to produce stable, self-replicating varieties. Crosses between wheat and rye also occasionally occur in nature, and in very rare instances create viable plants.

### What does triticale have to offer?

Triticale varieties now used in the U.S. are used primarily for grazing, silage, and hay. High yield, high forage quality, extended grazing season, and greater tolerance to many diseases, insects, and stress conditions make properly-chosen forage triticales a profitable addition to forage programs. Varieties are also now becoming available in some regions of the U.S. for grain production. These varieties combine very high yields with excellent feed quality.

### Are there different types of triticale?

Definitely! Worldwide there are hundreds of different varieties of triticale. They differ tremendously in important traits such as winter hardiness, growth habit, and productivity. There are forage types and grain types. For both forage and grain, there are "winter-types", "spring-types", and "intermediate" types just as there are in wheat.

## Choosing the right variety is critical!

### What is the best variety of triticale to use?

That depends on your growing conditions and how you want to use it. Some varieties produce more forage in the fall; others grow more slowly but stand more stress. Some produce more forage in the fall; others grow more slowly but stand more stress. Some are better for grazing, others for silage or hay, while others are primarily for grain. The best approach is to buy seed of a known, proven variety from a reputable source. Start with a small amount, and test how the growth characteristics of the triticale variety fit with your other crops to meet your needs. Chances are that a well-chosen triticale variety will be a highly profitable addition to your current crop production.

### How many acres of triticale are being grown?

For the U.S., the most recent estimate is about 1 million acres, reflecting a steady increase. Approximately 7 million acres were grown worldwide in 2000.

**Why didn't triticale become a major crop after it was promoted so heavily in the past?**

The way triticale was originally promoted it is surprising any is still grown at all! When triticale was just getting started, some promoters pushed it aggressively as a "miracle" grain crop, when in fact those early types of triticale still had many shortcomings, especially for grain production. In later years problems occurred when unadapted varieties were brought into an area. That still happens, making it very important for farmers to know what variety of triticale seed is being offered.

**Does triticale ever "revert back" to wheat or rye?**

No, it is difficult to combine the wheat and rye to create triticale, but once the combination is made, the triticale is stable and self-replicating; and will not revert back or "break down" to produce rye or wheat plants.

**Will triticale become a "weed" in my fields the way that rye and ryegrass can?**

No, triticale does not have the seed dormancy or growth characteristics that would make it a weed. Under some conditions, if a triticale crop makes seed that is left in the field it will "volunteer" the next growing season just as wheat or barley would. Since current varieties of triticale tend to be taller than wheat, the volunteer triticale is more likely to be visible than volunteer wheat.

**Is triticale a "GMO"?**

All current varieties of triticale have been bred by traditional breeding methods, and are not "GMOs" as that term has come to be known.

**What are the most important things to know about growing triticale?**

Because there are tremendous differences among triticale varieties, it is critical to choose a variety that is right for the desired use and location.