The Whole Grain Connection Newsletter
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About growing spelt in California

There is no doubt that spelt wheat is a wanted ancient wheat type, by both bakers and consumers looking to use and eat *ancient* wheat. Spelt has been popularized by interpretations of the writings of Hildegard von Bingen from around 1100 AD. (See the VITASPELTtm handbook by Dr Wighard Strehlow, *The Wonderfood Spelt*, 1989) Essentially her message was that spelt is a wonder food that can prevent or cure a multitude of diseases that we now call metabolic diseases (diabetes, cardiovascular disease, constipation, and more). I venture to say that in the light of modern research all this healthfulness that comes from eating spelt, is only if it is in the whole grain form. It then matches the ability of all organic whole wheat in producing this good health. *Refining any wheat, including spelt, will lead to a loss of the healthfulness now associated with the multitude of factors in the bran and germ, which are removed in the refining process.*

Most varieties of spelt available currently have been bred after 1900 to achieve a modern goal such as increased yield, decreased height or for animal feed. Most are winter types (long season types) that may not come to fruition in the typical California wheat growing season.

Over more than a decade the *Whole Grain Connection* has been growing out several naturally spring types of spelt selected from landraces in Asturias in Northern Spain. These are more appropriate to the California climate and are available in limited amounts for farmers to further propagate as cash crops. The one winter spelt in our *catalog* is from Switzerland and was originally chosen for an out-of-state grower; it would be appropriate in the foothill and mountain regions of California with an early fall planting.

However, in California the incentive for farmers to grow spelt has been low, mainly due to the lack of de-hulling equipment in post-harvest grain processing facilities. This is about to change. *Dixon Seed Company* in Glenn, California has the equipment needed to de-hull spelt. This opens the possibility for farmers in northern California to re-consider growing spelt.

Knowing now that de-hulling can be done at scale in California, WGC would like to find farmers who could propagate the spelt seed to full scale farmer amounts. The process of organic seed propagation so that the seed remains pure is of course, demanding. The planting field should be organic and not have had any grain grown there in the previous 2-3 years. Planting, harvesting and post-harvest processing all need to be done with well-cleaned out equipment to avoid introducing other seed varieties. Third party testing such as through the *California Crop Improvement Association Heritage Seed Quality Assurance Program* is the ideal way to show seed purity to customers for the seed. In turn, farmers growing heritage spelt and their miller-baker customers want to demonstrate transparency from seed to table. To do this we need pure seed and pure crops!

Let us know if you are interested and able to propagate spelt seed with or for WGC. Please contact *Monica Spiller: barmbaker@aol.com or 1-650 938 2865 (leave a voice mail or text)*

Ultra-processed ingredients!
On thinking about ultra-processed foods, I'd suggest that the effects can be best explained by considering individual ultra-processed *ingredients* instead of ultra-processed foods in general. To that end I wrote a comment to the FDA following their request for public comment on ultra-processed foods. Here is a link to my comment:
http://wholegrainconnection.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/ultraprocessedingredients.pdf