

First food-grade intermediate wheatgrass released

August 6 2020



UMN Kernza researcher Prabin Bajgain evaluating intermediate wheatgrass in selection nursery at St. Paul, MN before harvest in fall 2019. Credit: Prabin Bajgain

Compared to annual crops, perennial crops provide sustainable

environmental benefits such as reduced soil and water erosion, reduced soil nitrate leaching, and increased carbon sequestration. Inclusion of sustainable cropping systems into mainstream agriculture has been a challenge given the lack of food-grade perennial grain cultivars.

In an article recently published in the *Journal of Plant Registrations*, a publication of the Crop Science Society of America, University of Minnesota researchers report the release of the first commercially available intermediate wheatgrass (IWG) cultivar. IWG is a cool-season perennial grain crop domesticated primarily for food use while maintaining the ecological benefits it offers.

The cultivar, named 'MN-Clearwater,' produces 696 kg ha⁻¹ (621 lb ac⁻¹) of grain on average with the first two years; it produces its highest grain yields under Minnesota conditions. It is relatively short at 113 cm and has minimal lodging with trace disease levels. MN-Clearwater is expected to perform well in US Upper Midwest, southern regions of Canada, and the US Northeast.

As the first IWG cultivar released for sale under the Kernza trade name, we expect MN-Clearwater to be a cornerstone resource for the IWG research community as well as for interested growers, food processors, and commercial partners.

Adapted from Bajgain, P, Zhang, X, Jungers, JM, et al. 'MN-Clearwater', the first food-grade intermediate wheatgrass (Kernza perennial grain) [cultivar](#).

More information: Prabin Bajgain et al, 'MN-Clearwater', the first food-grade intermediate wheatgrass (Kernza perennial grain) cultivar, *Journal of Plant Registrations* (2020). [DOI: 10.1002/plr2.20042](https://doi.org/10.1002/plr2.20042)

Provided by American Society of Agronomy

Citation: First food-grade intermediate wheatgrass released (2020, August 6) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-08-food-grade-intermediate-wheatgrass.html>

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