

New wheat varieties

In India, scientists at the Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishwavidyalaya are developing improved wheat strains for drought-prone hill regions of the state in particular and the country as a whole. Efforts are underway to develop superior varieties for varied agro-climatic environments in the state. Certain potential genetic resources are being used to introgress desirable traits – like drought and cold tolerance, disease resistance, enhanced protein content and better phosphorous uptake – into the spring wheat genetic background. Wheat varieties such as Aradhana, Surbhi, Palam and Saptdhara have already been developed through conventional breeding and released for use in different areas. Efforts are on to reduce the period of wheat variety development by about 4-5 years. (India Grains, March 2001)