

GROWER TESTIMONIALS – VARIETIES THAT TICK ALL THE BOXES

This article features brief reports on the real-life experiences of three farmers with three varieties of cereals in three different regions of Germany, giving pointers to future growers: the winter wheat COMPLICE (B) and the winter barleys SENSATION and ESPRIT.

Harald Sonderrmann on COMPLICE (B)

“The limiting factor for us is water.” The village of Wiederstedt in the Mansfeld-Südharz district of Saxony Anhalt lies in the rain shadow of the Harz Mountains and has received virtually no rainfall for four weeks – maybe just 3mm or 4mm here and there (as of May 2022), but never the full amount the crops so urgently need. This is the third year in a row that they have experienced this enormous late spring drought – in a region where the long-term average rainfall used to be 480mm. However, since this latest drought period started in 2019, there has been no more than 360mm to 380mm of rain. Nevertheless, Harald Sonderrmann still managed to harvest an average 60dt*/ha of wheat in 2021. As in the last few crop years, the variety COMPLICE even outperformed his other wheat varieties, with stands yielding an average of 65 to 70dt*/ha. Achieving protein contents of 13% and a hectolitre weight of 75-77kg/hl, he was more than satisfied under the circumstances.

Harald Sonderrmann reports on the most recent crop year. In his view, COMPLICE is just the right variety for his land where the sowing conditions were optimal in 2021. In that year, the preceding crops in the various fields had been oilseed rape, maize and wheat. The agricultural cooperative rotates Wiederstedt maize, sugar beet, winter rape, winter wheat and winter barley. Maize is grown mainly

to feed the 400 dairy cows, with a smaller quantity used as feedstock for the anaerobic digester. COMPLICE is also mixed into the ration at 1kg/cow/day, as it ensures consistently high yields. The wheat is processed and shredded on the farm, but most of it is sold on. Cash crops account for 60-70% of Harald Sonderrmann’s business and livestock 30-40%. The region focuses on the production of A-grade wheat. So why has he chosen to grow the B-grade COMPLICE for the fourth time in a row?

Why COMPLICE?

Harald Sonderrmann doesn’t hesitate: “Growth, health, robustness – COMPLICE has always been stable and reliable, espe-

Location: Wiederstedt
Field size: total 1,550ha; 700ha of wheat, of which 150ha is COMPLICE
Soil: 70 - 85 soil score points; 80-point soils on all COMPLICE fields
Soil type: (silt) loess loam

cially in these recent dry years. And in these difficult times, a reliable variety is an indispensable variety”, he replies.

The crop established relatively rapidly in autumn, so no weed control was needed.



DSV consultant David Beckel (left) shows Harald Sonderrmann the COMPLICE variety during a visit to the regional variety trials. The awned wheat was an instant hit!

COMPLICE received two applications of fertiliser – the first as early as late February/early March and as soon as he could get a tractor on the fields. The fertiliser is Kalkamon (calcium ammonium) or Piamon (nitrogen and sulphur), depending on the pre-crop and site. The first dose must be applied at the earliest possible opportunity, because COMPLICE is an early variety that produces early vegetative growth and thus requires fertiliser sooner than other varieties. This was also one of the reasons why Harald Sondermann chose COMPLICE. “The fact that it is an **early ripening** variety gives me greater flexibility in terms of crop and rotation planning”, says Harald. Not only does it enable him to extend the harvesting season of his 700 hectares of winter wheat; early winter wheat is a very good pre-crop for oilseed



» COMPLICE IS A VERY RELIABLE AWNED VARIETY WITH A RELATIVELY HIGH YIELD POTENTIAL. IT'S GREAT TO SEE IT GROWING IN THESE FIELDS.«

Harald Sondermann

rape as it leaves sufficient time for tillage. He also praises the **undemanding nature** of the variety as well as its fusarium resistance and tolerance of late sowing, which makes it an excellent follow-on crop after maize. “COMPLICE has become an established standard variety on this farm.” Local DSV advisor David Beckel showed Harald Sondermann some examples of good wheat varieties at the nearby regional varietal trials at the time, including COMPLICE. It made a

very strong impression on him even then. Practical experience of growing COMPLICE has now demonstrated that it can cope with droughts in late spring which have come to typify local conditions in this area.

This reliability is the reason why Harald Sondermann has no intention of giving up COMPLICE.

*=1dt is the equivalent to 100kg

Knut Horstmann on SENSATION (mz)

Knut Horstmann from Warmen in the district of Nienburg/Weser in Lower Saxony farms 450ha on the North German Plain about 40m above sea level.

In Warmen too, as in many places in Germany, crops are increasingly suffering from late spring droughts. Average annual rainfall here has fallen from the previous 650-750mm to around 400mm since the start of these dry years. In addition, there are more and more government-imposed restrictions to contend with relating to crop protection and farming in general. So Knut Horstmann had originally planned to stop growing barley altogether in 2020, because he has maize in the rotation which may serve as a green bridge for virus-laden aphids. These insects can fly to young cereal crops even in autumn, infecting them with dwarf viruses. But when a colleague told Knut Horstmann about the variety SENSATION, he changed his mind and decided to grow SENSATION for a second time in the current 21/22 crop year. The variety's main appeal was its disease resistance, which would relieve him of the problem: “I no longer have to worry about aphids in autumn and spring because SENSATION is

resistant to barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV). Last year, aphids were still migrating during the late grain maize or CCM harvest. But there was no damage in my fields.”

The crop rotation on Knut Horstmann's arable farm includes wheat, triticale, oilseed rape, sugar beet and maize in addition to 38 hectares of barley (consisting entirely of SENSATION). The other mainstay is the poultry farm which he runs with his business partner. With the work that these two strands entail, he is only too pleased to save valuable time by not spraying insecticides. The multi-resist-

Site: Warmen, northern Germany; 40m amsl
Soil score: 20 to 45 soil points; soil type: sandy loam – loamy sand

ant variety SENSATION is fully resistant to all barley mosaic viruses (BaYMV) as well as to barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV). BYDV-resistance saves time and money by eliminating the need for insecticides. “With fewer and fewer chemicals available each year, any



Recommended by word of mouth: Knut Horstmann learned about the multi-resistant variety SENSATION from a colleague and approached his consultant about it.



improvements that can be achieved through selective breeding are only to our advantage” – says Knut Horstmann in response to the question of what significance he thinks resistance breeding will have in the future.

» SENSATION IS A HEALTHY VARIETY – AND THAT’S REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME.«

Knut Horstmann

Despite the drought SENSATION did well on Knut Horstmann’s land in its second crop year. It was sown in autumn after rape and came through the winter well. Since crop rotations in Lower Saxony and around Warmen are relatively maize-heavy, SENSATION is a very good fit for Knut Horstmann’s region. This is because BYDV has a wide host

range that includes several other crops apart from barley: wheat, oats, rye, triticale, maize and rice, as well as cultivated and wild grasses and adjacent lawns. More information on barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV) can be found on page 10.

SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR SOME EXCITING
INFORMATION ABOUT
RESISTANCE BREEDING:



Ludger Großekathöfer on ESPRIT (mz)

Robust and lodging-resistant

DSV’s multi-row barley variety ESPRIT has now delivered top yields for five years in a row, heading the league table in the three-year VCU trials and the two-year regional variety trials. We asked Ludger Großekathöfer whether it lives up to its reputation in practice.

He breeds pigs and grows arable crops on his farm in Langenberg in North Rhine-Westphalia. All the feed for his sows and gilts is produced on the farm.

Ludger Großekathöfer was quick off the mark and grew the ESPRIT variety in the first year after its approval on the recommendation of his consultant Frank Engelinkemper from the local agricultural services cooperative Raiffeisen Beckum. Frank Engelinkemper is always on the lookout for new high-yielding varieties that are healthy and lodging-resistant. Ludger Großekathöfer in turn always checks that new varieties can be fertilised



ESPRIT’s ramularia resistance was what immediately struck Ludger Großekathöfer.

with organic fertilisers, are lodging-resistant and have no problems with ramularia – so ESPRIT is the perfect choice! With its high yield potential, outstanding ramularia resistance and compatibility with low-input cropping systems, it satisfies the farmer’s stringent requirements. Ludger Großekathöfer tested ESPRIT initially on a 5 ha plot and was immediately persuaded.

Now growing it for the third year, he currently has 25 ha under cultivation and his enthusiasm has not diminished. On the contrary – “ESPRIT ticks all the boxes for me – it’s robust, lodging-resistant and healthy, and has high yield potential.”

In addition to barley, he also grows maize, field beans, carrots for juicing, oilseed rape, wheat, triticale and sugar beet.

» ESPRIT TICKS ALL THE BOXES FOR ME – IT’S ROBUST, LODGING-RESISTANT AND HEALTHY, AND HAS A HIGH YIELD POTENTIAL.«

Ludger Großekathöfer

He is keen to point out that barley has invariably been his strongest crop during this recent run of dry years, and especially dry early summers. Average annual precipitation in this region is now only maximum 550mm, compared with the 700 to 750mm that would normally be expected. Last year, with beans as the preceding crop, he was able to harvest more than 10 t/ha of ESPRIT, making barley, in his words “the top performing cereal crop once again”.

Site: Langenberg, western Germany, 90m amsl
Soil score: 30 to 50 points; soil type: “We’ve got it all, from sandy loam to clayey loam”