



How will wheat protein affect the UNL TAPS Contest?

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Over the past seven years, the average protein percentage of the U.S. hard red winter wheat crop has been on a downward trend according to the U.S. Wheat Associates Annual Crop Quality Reports (Table 1). Thus, there is a demand for high protein hard red winter wheat despite rising global ending stocks for the commodity as a whole. This has prompted many grain buyers to implement premiums and discounts for hard red winter wheat based on grain protein levels.

Managing quality factors like protein in the field can be difficult for producers. This is especially true for dryland wheat that is reliant upon highly variable rainfall making accurate yield predictions difficult. Regardless, nitrogen availability and application timing the primary driver in grain protein percentage¹. The question is, “How much are you willing to spend on N to boost your grain protein?”

The answer to this question is ultimately, “It depends!” Wheat protein premiums and discounts vary by elevator and crop year making it difficult to identify the maximum return from nitrogen application.

Protein premiums or discounts add a twist to the UNL TAPS wheat contest. The fertility practices of a team could greatly alter the revenue ultimately received.

At the time of this article, Sidney, NE area hard red winter wheat buyers are offering approximately \$0.03/bu. for every 1/5 percentage of grain protein over their base percentage. i.e. for every 1 percent increase in grain protein could result in an additional \$0.15/bu.

Table 1. Average Hard Red Winter Wheat Protein

2013	13.4%
2014	13.3%
2015	12.4%
2016	11.5%
2017	11.4%
2018	12.4%
2019	11.4%

Source: U.S. Wheat Associates Annual Crop Quality Reports 2013-2019.

2019 UNL TAPS WHEAT CONTEST RULES:
Protein, test weight, and dockage will be assessed using sub-samples collected from the plot area of each team. And discount on price or premium will be calculated from these sub-samples.

¹ <http://landresources.montana.edu/soilfertility/documents/PDF/pub/NWhtProtEB0206.pdf>

Protein premiums and discounts vary and are subject to change. If the 2020 crop brings higher protein bushels to the bin, the premiums will decrease or if protein continues to be low, premiums may rise. It is important know how each elevator assesses premiums or discounts. Here are a few examples:

Location	Base Rate	Premium	Discount
Crossroads, Sidney	11%	+\$0.03/bu. for every 0.2% up to 13%	No discount between 10% and 11%. -\$0.03/bu. each 0.2%. \$0.15/bu. max discount
CHS Grainland, Julesburg	10%	+\$0.03/bu. for every 0.2%	No discount.
Scoular, Sidney	11%	+\$0.03/bu. for every 0.2%	-\$0.02 each 0.2% between 11% and 10%. -\$0.03 each 0.2% below 10%. \$0.25 max discount

It is important for TAPS wheat competitors to consider the potential impact that grain protein content may play in the contest as balance between costs and revenue is more complicated in wheat.