

WHITE SONORA WHEAT

GRAIN SCHOOL

University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS)



Supporting Family Farms

White Sonora *Triticum aestivum*

Introduction

White Sonora wheat was introduced in the Americas by the Spanish in the 1600s (1). This wheat has been used in present-day northern Mexico, southern Arizona, and among indigenous communities. It has been used in many wheat-based recipes throughout the region. White Sonora was a foundational crop of "America's breadbasket" and helped prevent starvation for soldiers on both sides of the civil war. White Sonora, also known as, Sonora Blanca or Flor de America, disappeared from production in 1975 before a recent revival in Arizona through Native Seed Search (2).

White Sonora serves as a cultural bridge between Mexico and the southwestern United States and played a large role in the expansion of wheat flour tortillas versus the traditional corn tortillas. Foods such as burritos and chimichangas only exist because of white Sonoran wheat tortillas (3). Damming of rivers in the 1900s caused excess irrigation that resulted in huge losses of Indigenous White Sonora (4).

Even in the low moisture, dry soil climates of Mexico and Arizona, white Sonora can thrive. This wheat is spring-planted in the north and fall-planted in the south. White Sonora performs well in soils that have clay, are sandy, loamy, and have a pH between 6.0 and 7.0. Sonora Blanca is resistant to stem rust and Fusarium blight. Animal manure is encouraged due to the moderate nitrogen requirement of this wheat. This heritage wheat may be harvested in as little as 90 days in the mild south. Yield is variable, with some farmers seeing an average of 2100 lbs/acre. A sowing rate of 70-100 lbs/acre in conventional systems is effective but higher rates help control weeds in organic systems.

