# For Amber Waves Of Grain: High-Yield Wheat Stretches Around The World

North Dakota State University
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Developing a new variety of wheat takes time — as much as 10 years. So James Faller, a research specialist who worked in the hard red spring wheat breeding program at North Dakota State University (NDSU) for more than 30 years, knew it might be a decade until his hard work bore fruit.

But sadly, Faller died in 2006 — before some of the projects he was working on had come to fruition. In honor of Faller's contributions, Mohamed Mergoum, Ph.D., the breeder Faller worked with, dubbed one of the wheat varieties "Faller" in his honor.

> *Because of its high yield, the wheat developed in Fargo, N.D., called Faller hard red spring wheat, can make its mark far beyond the state's boundaries.*

The United States exports hard red spring wheat varieties — which mainly grow in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana — to Europe, Asia and South America. In fact, the United States exports about 50 percent of its hard red spring wheat, according to Mergoum.

This is good news for other countries, especially those that have suffered severe drought. Such countries can help meet local demand for wheat by importing the high-yielding Faller variety and mixing it with lower-quality wheat. Thus, the variety that Jim Faller helped develop might show up in a meal in Egypt or South Africa.

Faller wheat is noted for its elasticity, which makes it especially suitable for products such as pizza dough. But this adaptable wheat variety not only shows up in pizza. It also serves as the main ingredient in baked goods such as bread and cookies. Naming this hardy, high-yield wheat after Faller seems a fitting tribute to a researcher whose colleagues describe him as very hard-working.

Nowadays, Faller's name lives on, both in the wheat variety named after him and in the form of his son Jay, who is involved in the barley-breeding program at NDSU.

Considering Jim Faller's legacies to the agricultural community — and his contribution to meeting the increasing demand for wheat around the world — somehow that seems fitting.

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