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Source / Izvornik: **Poljoprivreda, 2012, 18, 25 - 29**

Journal article, Published version

Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:151:639969>

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Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2025-03-04**



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# DISTRIBUTION OF ALLELIC VARIANTS OF HEXAPLOID WHEAT GERMLASM AT XGWM261 AND PPD-D1 LOCUS

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Original scientific paper  
Izvorni znanstveni članak

## SUMMARY

**Traits like plant height and response to photoperiod are involved in controlling many quality characteristics that breeders look into the desired genotype. Today, climatic changes in traditional wheat growing regions cause day temperature rising and water supply shortening. Exploitation of various semi-dwarfing (*Rht*) and photoperiod response (*Ppd*) genes could help the implementation of wheat breeding programs, especially selection of stable and stress adaptable varieties targeted for different environments. Microsatellite *gwm261* is located on *Xgwm261* locus, and it is 0.6 cM distant from *Rht8* gene on 2DS chromosome, which can also include *Ppd1* gen for insensitivity to photoperiod. PCR screening of Croatian and foreign wheat varieties showed prevalence of 192 bp allele at *Xgwm261* locus and photoperiod insensitive allele (*Ppd-D1a*). The results of this research could be useful for more accurate characterization and selection of Croatian wheat cultivars and foreign ones aiming to cross and create new adaptable varieties.**

**Key-words:** wheat, allelic variability, *Xgwm261* locus, *Ppd-D1* locus

## INTRODUCTION

Wheat production must be increased to meet the overgrowing human population demands. Gregory and George (2011) stated that cereal yields and production had increased 3-fold in the last 50 years and that it would need to continue to increase at the same absolute rate for the next 40 years. Modern breeding relies on stable, high yielding, good quality and short-stemmed wheat varieties. That was and still is the most important goal in most countries for many years. Traits like plant height and response to photoperiod are involved in controlling these quality characteristics that breeders look into the desired genotype. Breakthrough in plant breeding was introduction of semi-dwarfing and dwarfing genes. Reduction in plant height from 150 to 70 cm is itself directly responsible for increases in productivity and resistance to lodging. Those plants are more efficient because of their ability to divert assimilates into production of grain rather than straw and by that dramatically improve the harvest index (Worland and Snape, 2000). Today, climatic changes in traditional wheat growing regions cause day temperature rising and shortening of water supply.

Winter wheat varieties should avoid high summer temperature and heat stress with earlier flowering time and photoperiod insensitivity. Exploitation of various semi-dwarfing (*Rht*) and photoperiod response (*Ppd*)

genes could help the implementation of wheat breeding programs, especially selection of stable and stress adaptable varieties targeted for different environments. Introduction of varieties like Norin 10 and Saitama 27 that carried *Rht* genes (*Rht-B1b*, *Rht-D1b* and *Rht-B1d*) led to significant increase of yield in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Worland et al., 2001). These genes are present in the majority of world semi-dwarf wheat varieties and played major role in "Green revolution". Microsatellite *gwm261* is located on *Xgwm261* (Röder et al., 1998), it is 0.6 cM distant from *Rht8* gene on 2DS chromosome, which can also include *Ppd1* gen for insensitivity to photoperiod (Korzun et al., 1998). Even though few exception regarding the linkage between *gwm261* and *Rht8* had been reported (Ellis et al., 2007), this microsatellite had been very useful in many studies like Worland et al. (2001) on 870 accessions worldwide, Liu et al. (2005) on 408 Chinese breeding lines and 98 CIMMYT, US and European breeding lines, Dvojkovic et al. (2010) on 122 hexaploid wheat accessions (98 Croatian varieties), and

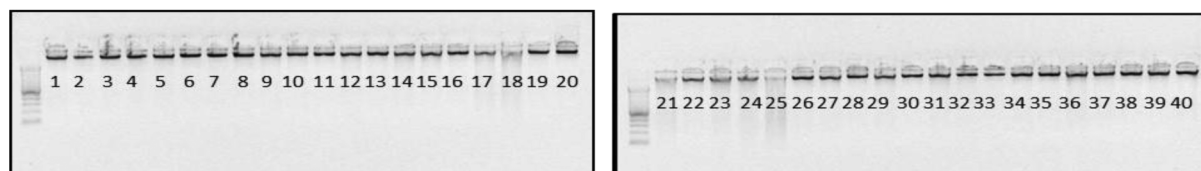
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Aspland et al. (2012) who reported allelic diversity of the mentioned marker on historical and archaeological wheat varieties from the year 1865 and presented transition from traditional to modern agriculture. Varieties in South eastern part of Europe tend to carry *Rht8* gene together with *Ppd-D1* gene, and with relatively short stem and earliness as their common traits allow them to be resistant to lodging and ripen fast before drought begins (Chebotar et al. 2001; Ganeva et al., 2005; Šip et al. 2011). Aims of this research were: (a) to determine allelic variability at locus *Xgwm261* and (b) to determine existence and diversity of *Ppd-D1* alleles in 40 winter wheat varieties emphasising Croatian varieties and their importance in wheat breeding and possible use in marker assisted selection (MAS).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Total of 40 winter bread wheat varieties, registered in Croatia from 1931 to 2008, were used in this study. Varieties originated from Croatia (CR), Austria (AU), France (FR), Italy (IT) and Russia (RU). Twenty plants

per genotype were grown in greenhouse during 20 days (20°C; 12h day/12h night), leaves were harvested at three leaf phase. DNA isolation was done by CTAB method (Doyle and Doyle, 1987) modified by Grljušić, (2003). DNA concentration was measured using Thermo Scientific NanoDrop 2000® spectrophotometer, while DNA quality was determined by electrophoresis with standard  $\lambda$ -DNA (Figure 1; number represent varieties in Table 2). Primer sequences of molecular markers used are shown in Table 1. Analysis of microsatellite locus *Xgwm261* which is 0.6 cM distant from *Rht8* gene (Korzun et al., 1998) was carried out using microsatellite *gwm261* according to Röder et al. (1998). GeneAmp® Thermocycler 9700 was used for PCR reaction (step 1: 5 min at 94°C; step 2: 5 cycles of 45 sek at 95°C, 5 min at 68°C (-2°C by cycle) and 1 min at 72°C; step 3: 5 cycles of 45 sek at 95°C, 2 min at 58°C (-2°C by cycle) and 1 min at 72°C; step 4: 27 cycles of 45 sek at 95°C, 75 sek at 45°C and 1 min at 72°C and final step 5: 10 min at 72°C, after which the products were separated on 6% acrylamide gel using a LI-COR4300 DNA analyser.



**Figure 1. Quality of isolated genomic DNA in comparison with  $\lambda$ -DNA (photo original; S.Petrović)**

Slika 1. Kvaliteta izdvojene genomske DNA u usporedbi s  $\lambda$ -DNA (foto original; S.Petrović)

Characterization of photoperiod genotypes at the *Ppd-D1* locus using allele-specific primers was carried out by Beales et al. (2007). Photoperiod-insensitive allele was labelled as *Ppd-D1a* while *Ppd-D1b* was labelled as photoperiod-sensitive. Allelic variants at the *Ppd-D1* locus were detected using three gene-specific

primers in a multiplex PCR assay, in which the primer pair *Ppd-D1\_F* and *Ppd-D1\_R1* produced a 414 bp fragment in genotypes with the photoperiod sensitive allele *Ppd-D1b*, whereas primer pair *Ppd-D1\_F* and *Ppd-D1\_R2* produced a 288 bp fragment in those with photoperiod insensitive allele *Ppd-D1a*.

**Table 1. Primer sequences and annealing temperatures for detecting alleles at *Xgwm261* and *Ppd-D1* loci in wheat**

Tablica 1. Parovi početnica i temperatura nalijeganja početnica za identifikaciju alela na lokusima *Xgwm261* i *Ppd-D1* u pšenice

Locus Lokus	Molecular marker Molekularni marker	Primer sequence (5'-3') Sekvenca početnica (5'-3')	Annealing temperature (°C) Temperatura nalijeganja početnica (°C)
<i>Xgwm261</i>	<i>gwm261</i>	CTCCTGTACGCCTAAGGC CTCGCGCTACTAGCCATTG	55
	<i>Ppd-D1_F</i>	ACGCCTCCCACTACTACTG	54
<i>Ppd-D1</i>	<i>Ppd-D1_R1</i>	TTGGTTCAAACAGAGAGC	
	<i>Ppd-D1_R2</i>	CACTGGTGGTAGCTGAGATT	

PCR was performed in Thermocycling conditions with an initial denaturation at 94°C for 2 min, followed by 40 cycles of 30' at 94°C, 30 s at 52°C, 1 min at 72°C, and a final extension step at 72°C for 5 min. Amplified PCR fragments were separated on 1.2% agarose gel at 200 V for 30 min, stained with ethidium bromide, and visualized using UV light.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Microsatellite analysis of 40 wheat varieties indicated that these varieties carry four different allelic variants on locus *Xgwm261* (Figure 2, Table 2). For total of 40 wheat genotypes, 28 were classified as the 192 bp, 6 as the 174 bp, 4 as the 165 bp and 2 as 196 bp. From 40 tested varieties 31 had *Ppd-D1a* allele and nine had *Ppd-D1b* allele

(Table 1). Among 192 bp classified varieties are Libellula, Bezostaja and Zlatna dolina, and 174 bp variety Soissons which is in accordance to results by Worland et al. (1998) and Dvojković et al. (2010). The above mentioned allele size (192 bp) is diagnostic allele for *Rht8* and *Ppd1* whose background can be correlated from Japanese variety Akakomughi, introduced in wheat breeding program by Nazareno Strampeli, and from Russian varieties Bezostaja,

Kavkaz and Aurora (Worland et al., 1998; Borojević and Borojević, 2005; Zheleva et al., 2006). These Italian and Russian varieties are in background pedigrees of many Croatian genotypes with identified allele size of 192 bp. The majority of breeders in southeast part of Europe selected precisely these adapted genotypes with *Rht8/Ppd1*, which had traits like short stem and earliness and therefore higher spike productivity.

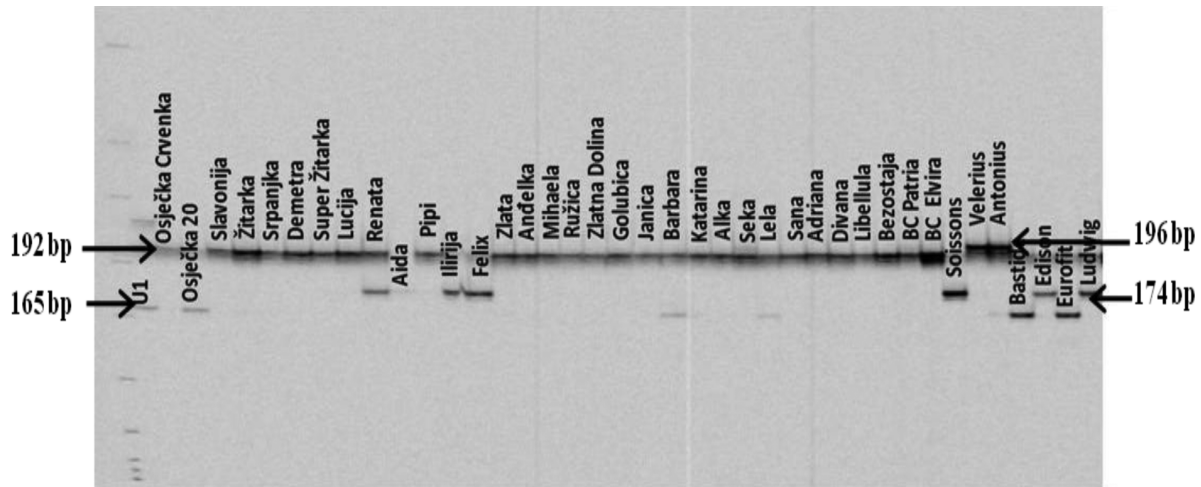


Figure 2. Distribution of alleles at *Xgwm261* locus for 40 winter wheat varieties

Slika 2. Distribucija alela na lokusu *Xgwm261* za 40 sorata ozime pšenice

Many authors (Korzun et al., 1998; Worland et al., 1998; Chebotar et al., 2001; Zhang et al., 2006), state that 192bp allele at *Rht8* gene is correlated with decreased plant height by 7 to 10 cm, while *Ppd1* gene have pleiotropic effect on earliness and maturity

for about 8 days and also decrease plant height for 10 cm more. These results are in concordance with previous study by Petrović (2011) where Srpanjka, Mihaela and Zlata had plant height of 65 cm and belonged to

Table 2. Distribution of alleles at *Xgwm261* and *Ppd-D1* locus in 40 winter wheat varieties

Tablica 2. Distribucija alela na lokusima *Xgwm261* i *Ppd-D1* u 40 sorata ozime pšenice

No. Br.	Variety Sorta	Origin Podrijetlo	<i>Xgwm261</i> alleles Aleli na lokusu <i>Xgwm261</i>	<i>Ppd-D1</i> alleles Aleli na lokusu <i>Ppd-D1</i>	No. Br.	Variety Sorta	Origin Podrijetlo	<i>Xgwm261</i> alleles Aleli na lokusu <i>Xgwm261</i>	<i>Ppd-D1</i> alleles Aleli na lokusu <i>Ppd-D1</i>
1	U1	CR	165 bp	b	21	Janica	CR	192 bp	a
2	Os.crvenka	CR	192 bp	a	22	Barbara	CR	192 bp	a
3	Osjecka 20	CR	165 bp	a	23	Katarina	CR	192 bp	a
4	Slavonija	CR	192 bp	a	24	Alka	CR	192 bp	a
5	Zitarka	CR	192 bp	a	25	Seka	CR	192 bp	a
6	Srpanjka	CR	192 bp	a	26	Lela	CR	192 bp	a
7	Demetra	CR	192 bp	a	27	Sana	CR	192 bp	a
8	Su. zitarka	CR	192 bp	a	28	Adriana	CR	192 bp	a
9	Lucija	CR	192 bp	a	29	Divana	CR	192 bp	a
10	Renata	CR	192 bp	a	30	Libellula	IT	192 bp	a
11	Aida	CR	174 bp	b	31	Bezostaja	RU	192 bp	a
12	Pipi	CR	192 bp	a	32	BC Patria	CR	192 bp	a
13	Ilirija	CR	174 bp	a	33	BC Elvira	CR	192 bp	a
14	Felix	CR	174 bp	b	34	Soissons	FR	174 bp	a
15	Zlata	CR	192 bp	a	35	Valerius	AU	196 bp	b
16	Andelka	CR	192 bp	a	36	Antonius	AU	196 bp	b
17	Mihaela	CR	192 bp	a	37	Bastide	FR	165 bp	b
18	Ružica	CR	192 bp	a	38	Edison	AU	174 bp	b
19	Zl.dolina	CR	192 bp	a	39	Eurofit	AU	165 bp	b
20	Golubica	CR	192 bp	a	40	Ludwig	AU	174 bp	b

the group of very early varieties according to morpho-agronomical traits.

Only three Croatian varieties (Ilirija, Aida and Felix) had 174bp allele. This allele is associated with photo-periodic sensitive gene (*ppd-D1*) prevalent in French, German and varieties from the United Kingdom, originated and introduced in breeding programs from Japanese variety Norin 10 (Worland et al., 1998; Zheleva et al., 2006). According to recent studies later heading varieties that carry *Xgwm261* alleles 174-bp and 165-bp, often in combination with *Ppd-D1b*, could guarantee broader adaptability, which is highly desirable for changeable weather conditions (Šip et al., 2010). Nevertheless in this study, varieties Aida and Felix are early varieties (Petrovic, 2011) but that carry 174 bp and *Ppd-D1b*. Contrary to Worland et al. (2001) these varieties do not fit in the characterization that the presence of *Ppd-D1a* contribute to height reduction through accelerating ear emergence time and reducing the life cycle by about 7 days. In study by Drezner et al. (2010) wheat varieties Aida and Felix showed significantly higher yield during two vegetation years on three different locations, with addition of high quality traits of variety Felix. This could be explained with pedigree and genetic background of these varieties, as well as possible interactions with other maturity genes. Presence of the mentioned alleles in Aida and Felix could favour broader adaptability which can be implemented in crosses and future breeding programs. Wheat varieties: U1, Osječka 20, Bastide and Eurofit had height-promoting allele 165 bp which is related with results by Dvojković et al. (2010). Old variety U1 and Austrian variety Eurofit are tall with average plant height over 100 cm which is consistent with results by Korzun et al. (1998) who established that 165 bp allele had height increasing effect, while Worland et al. (1998) determined his origin from, also Japanese variety, Saitama 27 and its prevalence in CIMMYT germplasm.

## CONCLUSION

Distinctive features of allelic distribution at *Xgwm261* and *Ppd-D1* loci in winter wheat germplasm were revealed. PCR screening of Croatian and foreign wheat varieties showed prevalence of *gwm261\_192* bp allele and photoperiod insensitive allele (*Ppd-D1a*). The results of this research should be helpful to breeders for more accurate characterization and selection of Croatian and foreign wheat varieties in order to optimize the choice of parents for crossings and selection strategy in different environments. Further analysis should be made broadening the study to more *Rht* and *Ppd* genes, combining it with their effect on agronomic traits.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The research work is a part of the research project 079-0730718-0268 financed by the MZOS.

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## DISTRIBUCIJA ALELNIH VARIJANTI GERMLAZME HEKSAPLOIDNE PŠENICE NA LOKUSIMA XGWM261 I PPD-D1

### SAŽETAK

*Velik broj svojstava koje oplemenjivači traže u željenim genotipovima kontrolirana su od strane gena koji utječu na visinu biljke i osjetljivost na fotoperiod. Danas promjena klimatskih prilika u tradicionalnim uvjetima uzgoja uzrokuju visoke temperature i sušu. Korištenje različitih *Rht* (Reduced Height Gene) te gena odgovornih za osjetljivost na fotoperiod (*Ppd*) mogu biti od velike pomoći u oplemenjivačkim programima pšenice, posebice u selekciji genotipova otpornih na stres koji će biti prilagođeni različitim okolinama. Mikrosatelit *gwm261* je smješten na lokusu *Xgwm261* koji je 0,6 cM udaljen od *Rht8* gena na 2DS kromosomu te koji može uključivati i *Ppd1* gen za neosjetljivost na fotoperiod. Rezultati dobiveni na temelju PCR reakcije pokazuju da u hrvatskoj germplazmi prevladava alel sa 192 parova baza, na lokusu *Xgwm261* te alel za neosjetljivost na fotoperiod (*Ppd-D1a*). Rezultati ovoga istraživanja mogu biti korisni za preciznije vrednovanje i odabir hrvatskih i stranih sorata kao roditelja u križanjima radi stvaranja boljih adaptabilnih sorata.*

**Ključne riječi:** pšenica, alelna varijabilnost, lokus *Xgwm261*, lokus *Ppd-D1*

(Received on 2 October 2012; accepted on 29 November 2012 - *Primljeno 02. listopada 2012.; prihvaćeno 29. studenoga 2012.*)