

Ferrari Tractor CIE

"Appropriate Technology for Agriculture"

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By simply hulling grain, you can turn a \$10.⁰⁰ per hundred weight commodity into a \$499.⁰⁰ per hundred weight food stuff. By this simple operation, you can add value.

There is an ancient wheat variety called "Triticum Dicoccum" that also goes by the name "Emmer". It grew wild in the Euphrates River region and was one of the first grains intentionally planted by man. It continues to be grown as a subsistence crop in the Middle East and in North Africa. It was introduced to Italy before the time of the Roman Empire, and was once a commonly grown crop.

Today it is an economic crop primarily in only two Italian provinces, Umbria and Tuscany. It is primarily used in pastas and served much like risotto (rise) and like bulgur wheat. Even outside these provinces one sees small shops in Italy that sell only pastas and bread made from Emmer wheat, called "Farro". It is valued as a highly nutritious whole grain, healthier than the modern wheat varieties that have been bred from it seeking higher production, uniform height, etc.

Emmer wheat shares a trait with rice, Spelt (another variety of wheat) and Buckwheat. That is, it has a hull that encapsulates the wheat beery that is not removed by standard threshers.

The Cicoria self-powered thresher called the Plot 375 can thresh the grain from the stalk, and then the grain can be put through a second and third time to hull the Emmer wheat. This thresher is more sophisticated and uses many different sizes of screens. One size is used in the threshing process, 10mm, and a smaller 5mm opening screen is used to do the hulling. This produces about 80% hulling. There is also the option to just hull the Emmer wheat 100% of the time, but the Cicoria Plot 375, while slower, and a little less efficient, is cheaper and uses only one machine to do both jobs.

The larger scale huller used for Spelt and Buckwheat here in the USA use the impeller principle, but cost \$25,000.⁰⁰ and up.

Once hulled, the Emmer wheat is stone ground or otherwise processed as any other wheat. While wheat in the USA sells for perhaps \$10/cwt (one hundred pounds), the Emmer wheat after hulling becomes known as "Farro" retailing for \$4.⁹⁹/lb. retail at Sacramento, CA on 7/23/14.

If you would like to learn more about the food known as Farro, there is an interesting story in the January-February 2000 issue of the magazine "Cucina Italiana". This article was originally written in 2001 and Farro has since gone mainstream. Today it is found in many supermarkets, and sells for \$4.⁹⁹ per pound.