

Soviet Wheat

➤ A GIANT-GRAINED hybrid wheat, with individual kernels almost three times the weight of ordinary wheat grains, is one of the agricultural novelties which Soviet scientists are preparing to carry back into western Russia as soon as it has been cleared of Nazis. A cablegram received from Soviet Scientists' Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow adds that the new grain variety is also highly resistant to practically all known fungus diseases of wheat.

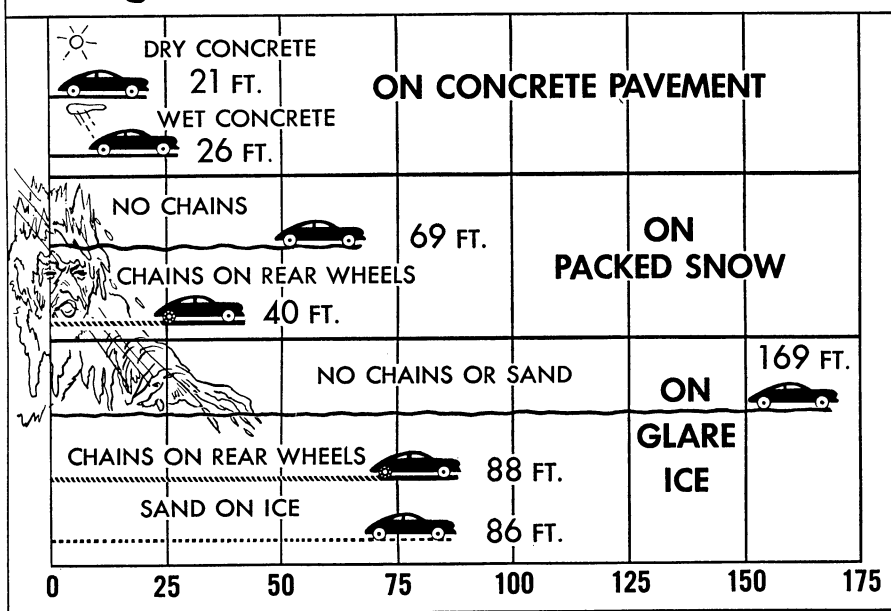
The hybrid was originated by Academician Anton Zhebrak, member of the Belorussian Academy of Sciences and professor of genetics at the Timiri-azev Academy. He was working on his breeding experiments in the White Russian city of Minsk when Hitler's invasion was launched, and carried his priceless propagation stock with him as he left the burning streets behind. Now he is ready to carry the descendants of those grains home from exile, for further tests in their ancestral soil.

Academician Zhebrak's hybrid is a cross between the standard hard or macaroni wheat known botanically as *Triticum durum* and a recently discovered wheat species from the Caucasian highlands, called *Triticum timopheevi*. He has patriotically given it the name Soviet wheat, or *Triticum sovieticum*.

It is from the timopheevi wheat that the new hybrid apparently derives its extreme resistance to fungus attacks. The same species has been introduced into breeding practice in the United States; of no economic value by itself, it is prized for the contributions it makes in hybrid combinations.

Academician Zhebrak has also produced a hybrid between the timopheevi species and common wheat (*Triticum*

Braking Distances on Various Surfaces at 20 mph



SKIDDING—The National Safety Council has prepared this chart in the hope that it will make car drivers more careful on dangerous winter streets. Traffic deaths in snow belt states last winter increased the mileage death rate 24% above the summer toll. The chart does not include in its "braking distances" the actual stopping distances, which are 22 feet more at 20 m.p.h., because it takes the average driver 3/4 of a second to react and apply brakes after seeing a reason to stop.

vulgare), which has progressed to the stage of large-scale field tests.

Both these hybrids are of the type which geneticists call amphiploid. This means that the full number of heredity-bearing chromosomes in the cells of both parents are added together in the offspring, instead of being halved and the half-numbers then added. This increased chromosome number often gives the resulting hybrids considerable advantages such as increased size and greater vigor.

The chromosome number for timopheevi wheat is 28, for durum wheat the number is also 28, and for common wheat it is 42. The timopheevi hybrid with common wheat thus has 70 chromosomes per cell, while the new Soviet wheat has 56.

Science News Letter, January 8, 1944

SAFETY

Transportation Troubles Cause Much Absenteeism

➤ TRANSPORTATION problems were responsible for as much as 31% of all absenteeism in some war plants

during severe weather last winter.

Concern over the annual increase of auto accidents, always greatest in mid-winter, and the necessity of avoiding traffic tie-ups and loss of essential vehicles or manpower, was expressed in a joint statement by Under Secretary of

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