

Notes from the Lab: .22-250 Remington (Using Sierra Bullets)

The history of the .22-250 Remington began with the introduction of the .250 Savage (circa 1915), with records indicating that the factory experimented by necking down that case to .22 caliber, but that cartridge never became commercially available. By the 1930s several experimenters including Harvey Donaldson, Grosvenor Wotkyns, J.E. Gebby, J.B. Smith, John Sweany and others necked the .250 Savage case to .22 caliber. Gebby trademarked the name .22 Varminter, the wildcat version most commonly encountered.

With the widespread popularity of the above wildcats, Remington first offered rifles and ammunition in 1965, making the .22-250 Remington a standard SAAMI cartridge. Soon other rifle and ammunition companies followed suit. The commercial version is very similar to Gebby's .22 Varminter. As of this writing, it has been 50 years since it was commercialized, and it still enjoys brisk sales. It is especially popular with prairie dog shooters and coyote hunters. It offers flat trajectory, accuracy, high velocity and low recoil.

Factory loads offer a nominal velocity of 3,650 fps with a 55-grain bullet; however, specialized loads are offered with bullet weights ranging from 35 to 64 grains.

The vast majority of .22-250 Remington rifles are fitted with either a one-turn-in-12 or 14-inch rifling twist, which generally stabilizes bullets ranging from 35 to 64 grains. Heavier bullets weighing 65 through 90 grains will require a faster twist to obtain correct bullet stabilization. For the Sierra 65-grain SBT and 69-grain HPBT, a 1-10 twist (or faster) appears to give the best overall stabilization. The 77- and 80-grain bullets are best served with 7- or 8-inch twists. Although data is not included for the relatively new Sierra 90-grain HPBT, a 1-in-6.5-inch twist is reported to give proper stabilization.

When using Sierra 50- and 55-grain Blitz bullets, it is suggested to keep velocities below 3,600 fps in 14-inch barrel twist, or bullets may come apart in flight. If fired from a 12-inch twist, Blitz bullet speeds should be kept below 3,500 fps to prevent disintegration in flight.