EXTENSION
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WHAT ABOUT FUNGICIDES ON WHEAT?

While there are not a lot of wheat acres in the area, several fields that were planted later in the fall and survived the winter, are looking good this spring. The heavy rainfall we have received this spring has helped the wheat get off to a good start. It has also created conditions very conducive to a number of fungal diseases. Too much rain can really cause some significant disease problems in wheat. Diseases usually are the yield limiting factor here in southeast Nebraska. Some of the diseases already identified in wheat fields in southeast Nebraska this spring include: stripe rust, powdery mildew and Septoria tritici blotch. With that in mind, one question that may arise if your wheat is doing well is, "What about fungicides to reduce diseases in your wheat?"

With the potential of getting a good yield for your wheat crop, the use of a fungicide may be beneficial in protecting your wheat crop from some foliar diseases. Wet conditions can be favorable for disease development. In previous years we have experienced some diseases on wheat in southeast Nebraska. Diseases are spread from seed, the soil, insects, or spores that are wind-blown from southern states. Virus diseases, such as soil borne mosaic and wheat streak mosaic are not treatable with fungicides. Diseases such as tan spot and powdery mildew can be controlled by fungicides. Tan spot can be spread via seed or crop residue. Wheat planted in wheat straw residue that was infected with tan spot is most susceptible to tan spot infection. Powdery mildew is usually a problem under wet, humid conditions like we are currently experiencing. If controlled early, these diseases will have little impact on crop yields. With the wet and rainy conditions we have been experiencing, it will be beneficial to scout your fields to determine if any diseases are developing and treat with a fungicide if necessary.

The impact of leaf rusts on wheat yields depends when these rust spores arrive in the state. The goal of successful disease control in wheat production is to maximize green leaf area during grain fill, which is the flag leaf followed by the flag-1 leaf. Fungicide application should be timed to protect the flag leaf. It is only economical to apply a fungicide if the return from fungicide application exceeds the cost of buying and applying the fungicide. Fungicides used to manage foliar diseases of wheat in Nebraska include: Headline, Quadris, Quilt, Stratego, Tilt, Proline, Prosaro and Caramba among others. If the wet conditions continue, it may be beneficial and economical to apply a fungicide to protect the flag leaf. Wheat leaf rust still could develop in Nebraska, but can be controlled effectively with fungicide. The other disease that we are concerned about each year is Fusarium head blight (Scab). Under our current conditions, the risk of Fusarium head blight could be high. Proline, Prosaro and Caramba are three triazole fungicides that have a good rating on controlling head scab and have a 30 day PHI (Pre-harvest Interval), meaning you have to wait 30 days after application until you harvest the wheat. Below is listed a link to a table of fungicides that can be used for control of wheat diseases.

https://cropwatch.unl.edu/documents/1841/8062087/2015+Fungicide+Efficacy+Table/21306ea6-794d-44a9-87e0-03756baf8af8.

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