

To: Local News

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Wheat, Stripe rust and Bagworms

With wheat near the boot stage and approaching heading in many parts of Kansas, producers are considering the use of fungicides to manage foliar diseases and protect the yield potential of their crop. Susceptible varieties are at highest risk for yield loss when environmental conditions are favorable for disease development. K-State research has found that a single application can result in a 4-13% yield increase in susceptible varieties relative to wheat that remained untreated.

The publication *Foliar Fungicide Efficacy for Wheat Disease Management* has been updated and can be found at: <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/EP130.pdf>. The recommendations in this publication reflect several years of head-to-head comparisons of products in Kansas and many other wheat producing states.

Producers should scout for symptoms of foliar diseases in the upper canopy, and particularly near the flag leaves of primary tillers. Damage to the flag leaf is most associated with reduced yield. Scouting efforts from across Kansas have reported several new occurrences of stripe rust this week. So far, incidence has generally been low. Lower canopy infections are less likely to result in yield reductions. When environmental conditions are favorable (extended periods of dew, for example), infections in the lower leaves may spread to the upper canopy and neighboring plants, resulting in reduced yield. Spread within a field and symptoms that have moved to the upper canopy may warrant a fungicide application. To preserve yield, it is critical to protect the flag leaf.

Stripe rust presents with characteristic yellow lesions that form in narrow bands across the leaf. When conditions are right, spores may spread to and infect the upper canopy. It is important to walk into the field during scouting campaigns and to move the canopy aside to get a good view of lower leaves. Walking several parts of the field is a good idea, as stripe rust can tend to form spots of high disease severity, which can be easy to miss from the edge of the field.

Bagworms

Timing is critical in many things, including controlling bagworms. Though handpicking is effective through much of the year, often it is impractical because of the sheer number of bagworms. However, if you only see a few bags, now would be a good time to pick them off and destroy them. As we mentioned above, large populations of bagworms can make handpicking impractical. In such cases, spraying is recommended. New bagworms will likely hatch and leave the mother's bag in May but spraying is usually not recommended until June. Spraying now will be ineffective because the young are too well protected inside their mother's bag. We also have a brochure on "Bagworms" at your local Twin Creeks Extension Office.