



CROP ALERT

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Weed Control in Wheat & Other Small Grains

As our temperatures are finally getting above 60 degrees and ground is drying out, weed control should be a priority in wheat. There have been lots of questions on spraying Osprey for bluegrass control. *Osprey has to be applied prior to jointing (Feekes stage 6), Figure 1, when the first node of the stem is visible. The node can be felt as a swelling (bump) on the stem just above the soil line.* Check out this resource on our website for all growth stages of wheat and other small grains, <http://www.nwnyteam.org/submission.php?id=478&crumb=grains|3>.

Some of our earlier planted wheat should be getting close to this stage right now. Spraying Osprey after this stage could cause stunting and possibly reduce yields. See the [24c Osprey label for NY](#)

and be sure to keep a copy with you if you use it. Like Osprey, the plant growth regulators 2,4-D, dicamba (Banvel or Clarity), and MCPA also need to be applied to wheat and other winter small grains before the jointing stage. Late herbicide applications can lead to kernel abortion and blank wheat heads that can ultimately reduce yield. The plant growth regulator herbicides are typically good on summer annual weeds but vary in their control of some of the more common winter annuals. For example, dicamba is better on chickweed. Harmony Extra and Harmony are less restrictive and can be applied to wheat until just before the flag-leaf is visible and have better broad-spectrum broadleaf control. Tank mixing nitrogen with herbicide will have an increased chance of “burning” the wheat and other small grains, especially on warmer days. Organic growers have some opportunities for tine weeding as the broadleaf weeds emerge in winter small grain stands. Get out as soon as soil conditions allow as the conditions can turn for the worse quickly.

Assessing Wheat & Other Winter Small Grain Stands

Most of our wheat made it through the winter with very little winterkill but we have had a couple fields that are questionable. Do you keep it or is it more profitable to plow it down and plant corn or soybeans? This is never an easy assessment since most of the damage is not consistent across the whole field. Some areas are

Figure 1: Wheat at Feekes 6.0



Source: Mike Stanyard

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adequate, while others could be blank. Most wheat researchers will tell you that if there is an overall field average of at least 10 plants per linear foot, it's a keeper. It is more important to determine the health of those remaining plants. Are all of those remaining plants going to make it? Peter Johnson up in Ontario has a nice video on how to assess your wheat stand at <http://fieldcropnews.com/2012/03/evaluating-winter-wheat-plant-stands/>. He states that if you have an average of seven healthy plants per foot of row you still can achieve 90% of maximum yield potential. Even as low as four healthy plants can achieve 85% potential yield.

Figure 2: Black Cutworm



Source: Mike Stanyard

Cutworms and Armyworms Coming Our Way?

For the last week there have been many reports of higher than average catches of Common Armyworm (CAW) and Black Cutworm (BCW) moths across the Midwest. Andy Michel from Ohio State is predicting that small CAW larvae could possibly be feeding by mid-May and BCW a little later in Ohio, weather dependent of course. This will be later for NY since larval development is based on accumulated heat units. It looks like it will be a busy scouting season for wheat and corn. We will keep a close eye of this one. These pests are not immediate threats to our NY crops. There are some newer Bt corn varieties that have resistance to both of these pests. See Chris DiFonso's updated Handy Bt Trait Table from Michigan State to see which ones, <http://msuent.com/assets/pdf/28BtTraitTable2015.pdf>.

Nitrogen on Grass Fields and Small Grain Silage

Many farmers are finishing up their nitrogen on winter wheat and moving onto to other crops. For grassy hay and silage fields at least 50 lbs./acre of nitrogen should go on in the next week if only two cuts will be taken. For folks taking three to four cuts, 75 to 100 lbs./acre of nitrogen should go on soon. Winter triticale silage (and other small grain silages) should in most cases receive at least 50 lbs./acre of nitrogen. The CP of the silage will increase 1% for every 18-20 lbs./acre of nitrogen applied. Three-fourths of the fields in our winter small grain silage nitrogen studies the past three years have had yield responses up to 100 lbs./acre, but most of the gains come from the first 50 units of nitrogen. Also about 25% of the winter triticale fields have not had yield responses to nitrogen fertilizer, likely due to a history of manure applications. Be sure to use some AMS or ATS as a sulfur source on these crops (20-25 lbs./acre of sulfur), especially if you haven't had a recent manure application. At this point in the season, avoid putting manure on fields were a first cut silage harvest will be taken. Wait until after harvest and apply the as soon as possible after the silage is removed from the field.

Corn Pop-Up and Starter Fertilizers at Planting

Lots of peas and oats have already gone in across our region, and the corn planters are starting to go through the better drained fields. An article on corn and soybean pop-up and starter fertilizers is available on our team website, <http://www.nwnyteam.org/submission.php?id=72&crumb=grains|3>.