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News Release

Wheat & Barley Producers Can Sign Up for Scab Alerts

Wheat and barley producers, as well as other interested parties, will find it easier to stay ahead of potential Fusarium Head Blight (scab) problems this year, thanks to a “scab alert” system recently instituted by the U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI).

Producers, crop consultants, grain processors and others can sign up for the alerts by going to the following web site address: http://scabusa.org/fhb_alert.php. The alerts will be sent out to one’s cell phone or email, depending upon the user’s preference. Frequency and timing of alerts will depend upon a given area’s risk for severe scab — which can vary widely, depending on environmental conditions.

The purpose of the alert system, according to USWBSI leaders, is to give growers and affiliated industry personnel better advanced notice of potential outbreaks and the risk of scab in their area, thus allowing for timely treatment of fields with fungicides. “We are aware that many farmers do not have easy or convenient access to the Internet, but most of them carry a cell phone,” says Dave Van Sanford, USWBSI co-chair. “We wanted a system that would send an alert to their cell phone, prompting them to take an appropriate action — such as going to the USWBSI website, checking with their county agent, chemical dealer or consultant, or simply looking at their crop to check its stage of development. Our hope is that the alerts will lead to some action that will reduce the impact of head scab on the crop.”

The alert system is tied in with the Fusarium Head Blight Risk Assessment Tool hosted by Pennsylvania State University, Kansas State University, Ohio State University and the U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative. This web site — www.wheatscab.psu.edu/riskTool—2010.html — provides detailed, daily updated information on scab risk in various U.S. small grain production regions. The FHB Assessment Tool is supplemented by commentaries from various state university plant disease specialists regarding environmental conditions and the presence of scab (or lack thereof) in their state. These commentaries provide the content behind the FHB alerts.

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For More Information about the FHB Alert System, please contact:

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