

July 16, 2013

News Release

Early 2013 Scab Reports: Southern States

The importance of weather in the development, or lack thereof, of Fusarium Head Blight (FHB, also known as “scab”) is again becoming evident. After a generally benign scab year in 2012, early reports provided to the U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative from southeastern U.S. state crop specialists suggest some “hot spots” in 2013.

“In North Carolina, this is a year of widespread but localized scab damage that is mainly confined to the northwest and northeast of the state,” Christina Cowper reported. “A rainy week in early May caused problems where they occurred,” said Cowper, a plant pathologist with the USDA Agricultural Research Service based at North Carolina State University. The problem was most serious in the central and northern Piedmont and northern Tidewater districts of the state. “A lot depended on whether there was substantial corn residue and whether susceptible varieties were being used,” Cowper added. “Some growers in danger zones applied scab-targeted fungicides; some did not.”

University of Georgia plant pathologist Alfredo Martinez noted that Fusarium Head Blight had been confirmed in a wheat field in extreme southern Georgia — this following several years during which no scab incidence had been reported in the state. “Unusually wet spring weather coinciding with wheat at flowering stages may have elevated the risk of FHB infections,” Martinez stated. As of when the wheat season was winding down in late June, however, he had received no reports of FHB in central or northern Georgia.

Austin Hagan, extension plant pathologist with Auburn University, said scab did show up in this year’s Alabama wheat fields. “Most growers in the main wheat production areas treated with Prosaro or Caramba [fungicide],” he noted.

To the west, University of Arkansas plant pathologist Eugene Milus noted in mid-June that there was “scattered scab in fields late in the season across Arkansas, just as the wheat was turning.” Notable differences were observed in scab incidence and severity across the spectrum of planted wheat varieties. As of late June, Milus reported, “We have some scab, but fortunately it came late enough that it has not caused any adverse issues.”

###

For more information, please contact: *Sue Canty, Manager*
U.S. Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative
Networking & Facilitation Office
Phone: 517-355-0271, Ext. 1183
Email: scabusa@scabusa.org