

Tough decisions could make dilemma for farmers

A serious financial dilemma is facing many wheat farmers over the next few weeks. Does the farmer spray a fungicide on the wheat, or does the farmer assume the crop is lost because of the freeze?

Unfortunately, a fungicide application has to be made to wheat before flowering to control rust that may cause the farmer to lose half of the wheat's potential yield. Yet, flowering is when the farmer will have a good idea of whether there is any damage to the wheat from the freeze. This unfortunately is the predicament in many fields.

So, lets go over what is known so far. I have received multiple reports from farmers and industry agronomists along with myself who have split open wheat stalks to view the head. For the most part, these accounts have indicated that there is some damage, but generally, the wheat they are looking at is in good shape. Obviously though, whenever there is a freeze that can damage wheat, a few degrees can make all the difference in the world. So those fields on bottom ground in particular, will likely have more damage than those out of the bottom. Injured wheat heads may have an off-white to yellow-brown color with a water soaked appearance compared to a crisp green head of uninjured wheat. To assess the damage, a farmer needs to split multiple stalks and see what percentage of heads are damaged. That will provide reasonable assessment for yield loss although secondary tillers can compensate for the loss from the primary tillers.

Once the farmer has determined that there is not much noticeable damage, scouting for rust should be done. Ideal growing conditions of 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit temperatures with humidity have allowed stripe rust to grow very

About ag
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quickly in some fields with leaf rust also increasing. A field checked for rust ten days ago may look completely different now which is why farmers need to check their fields.

The following are some comments on stripe rust from Jim Stack, K-State Wheat Pathologist. Stripe rust has become more of a problem in recent years. The difference this year is that about half the wheat planted in years when stripe rust was a problem were resistant to the disease and that may not be the case this year. Much of that wheat was Jagger, which has been a stripe rust-resistant variety. The races of stripe rust this year, however, appear to be different than during those outbreaks, so Jagger's and other varieties' ability to fend off this race of stripe and other rusts is not fully known.

Symptoms of stripe rust are long, rectangular stripes of small yellowish-orange pustules on the leaves. These pustules consist of masses of rust spores. Leaf rust pustules occur in a random pattern over the leaf and are usually darker (cinnamon) in color. Stripe rust also goes by the name of yellow rust. If left unchecked, stripe rust can kill the leaves of a wheat plant, so that it has no energy to form kernels.

Mr. Stack pointed out the emphasis is on protection. There is a sense of urgency about this because we're at a critical stage of development for wheat. The flowering to soft dough stage is where the biggest impact to yields occurs, but we can legally only apply fun-

gicides up to flowering. Therefore, he recommends the following:

- If growers see no symptoms of stripe rust, they should monitor their wheat closely every two days to check for symptoms.

- If growers find stripe rust on lower leaves, they should evaluate their crop's susceptibility, which is determined by the variety of wheat, the near-term weather forecasts and the stage of development. Stripe rust ratings for each variety can be found in the publication "Wheat Variety Disease and Insect Ratings".

- If growers find stripe rust on the upper two leaves, they should apply a fungicide. Fungicide options include Headline, Stratego, Quadris, and Tilt.

- If growers find that 50 percent of the flag leaf on the plants is destroyed, they should save the money and not spray.

Mr. Stack also indicated that other diseases have popped up around the state, but right now stripe rust is the biggest threat. Leaf rust is also present in some fields, but it favors warmer weather. To stop the rust, the area needs hot and dry weather. However, we all know that can cut into yields by shutting down the wheat plant.

All in all, there are many decisions producers need to make. Hopefully in the end, Mother Nature will allow us to get this crop in the bin. For more information on stripe and leaf rust or wheat variety ratings to these diseases, please go to www.oznet.ksu.edu/agronomy-block2/ or visit your local county extension office to pick-up a copy.

Please e-mail me at bolson@oznet.ksu.edu or call 785-443-1264 if you have any questions or would like to see a newspaper article on a specific crop production topic.

Vitamins could be poison to a child

Vitamin supplements seem healthy, but they can be dangerous when in the wrong hands. Children watching parents or grandparents take the supplements may mimic the adults and do the same—or mistake them for candy and eat several. Either can be toxic.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that supplements containing iron are the No. 1 cause of fatal poisoning in children ages three and under.

Poison control centers report about one million telephone calls a year from adults seeking help with children who have swallowed potentially harmful substances. About 30 children under the age of 5 die from accidental poisoning each year.

Antidepressants also can be dangerous. Here are some tips for parents, grandparents or others with children in the household:

- Choose child-resistant packaging.
- Close containers promptly after each use, rather than setting aside an open container while answering the telephone or doorbell.
- Childproof your home. Lock vitamin and mineral supplements, medications and household products out of sight — and reach —

Home ed
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of children.

- Post the poison control center number, (800) 222-1222.

- Time is everything. If you suspect that a child has consumed a hazardous substance, call the Poison Control Center immediately. The 800 number rings to a toxicologist who will ask the victim's age, weight, health conditions and details about the substance. For example, were pills swallowed? Were poisonous fumes inhaled or could the poison have been absorbed through the skin?

- If a child is unconscious, having difficulty breathing or convulsions, follow first aid guidelines and call 911 immediately.

- Read labels and warnings when buying and using household products such as paint, paint thinner, glue, art supplies, insect repellent, and cleaning, lawn, garden and pet products.

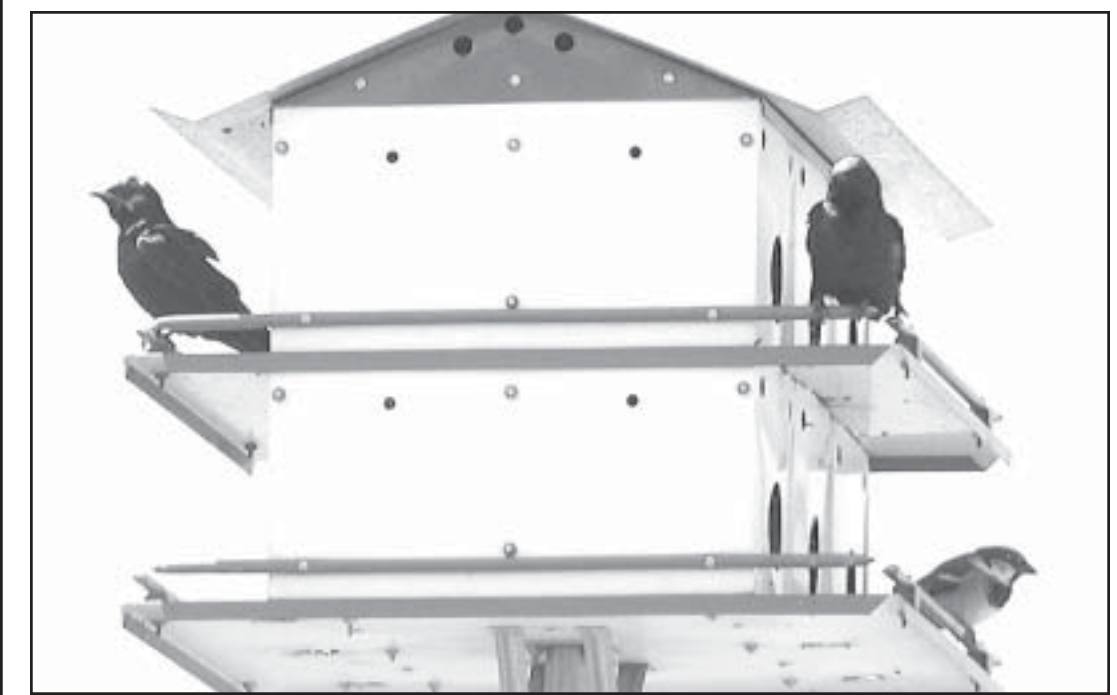
- Try to choose the least toxic

products you can find. Seemingly safe household products, like an extra bottle of windshield washer fluid, mouthwash or cologne, may look like a colorful beverage to a child. If mouthwash or cologne contains alcohol, a child who ingests it may suffer seizures, coma or death.

- Keep pills and hazardous substances in their original containers with identifying labels. Kitchens and bathrooms typically offer the most potential hazards, but garages and utility rooms can be hazardous as well.

- Do homework before selecting house, landscape or garden plants. If ingested, a daffodil bulb may be toxic. Leaves and flowers of lily of the valley may cause an irregular heartbeat and pulse, digestive upset and mental confusion, and consuming the leaf blade of rhubarb can cause convulsions and coma, followed by death.

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Home 'Tweet Home. A cloudless afternoon brought these feathered friends out to sun themselves perched on the rails of a purple martin house located on the south side of Felton's Ace Hardware's parking lot. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

NATIONAL HOSPITAL WEEK

MAY 8-14, 2005



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102 E. Holme ~ P.O. Box 250 ~ Norton, KS
1-785-877-3351



Doctors Clinic
711 N. Norton ~ Norton, KS
1-785-877-3305

During National Hospital Week, Norton County Hospital is honoring the gifted people who follow "A Calling to Care." Each day, you fill our halls with warmth, understanding, and compassion. Your kindness, your talents, and your attention to duty are admirable traits that touch the lives of our patients. For us, this is more than a job — it is "A Calling to Care."

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Norton County Hospital and Doctors Clinic Mission—
WE ARE DEDICATED TO:
CARING — For all who seek service...in a competent, compassionate and professional manner
COMMITMENT — Continually striving to improve the quality of healthcare and our services
COMMUNITY — To lead the provision, growth and coordination of healthcare services in this area

Thank You to the Community

National Hospital Week is being observed May 8-14. This year we are celebrating the gifted people who follow "A Calling To Care." From the most remarkable medical breakthrough to the simplest act of compassion, the people of health care are changing the world around them. It is a rare and rewarding calling. The unique skills and giving spirit of our staff help to produce the wonders of care. We are proud of our team and grateful for their contributions to the cause of healing. We thank you for entrusting your health care needs to us. You have our assurance

that the Norton County Hospital's Mission of Caring, Commitment, and Community is our top priority each and every day.
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