

farmers, crops vulnerable

The early April freezing blast that left frost and snow was another reminder of our vulnerable situation at times.

Waiting four to five days after such an event is a good time to evaluate plants. When wheat is in the joint stage and the growth point is 2 to 3 inches above the crown, the temperatures that can cause some concern are about 20-24 degrees for two hours at the soil level. Wheat at pre-joint stage, can get down to as low as upper teens. There were indeed some reports of temperatures in these ranges.

Take a close look at the general plant stand; how thick it is, and soil moisture, these factors will give some insulative properties to wheat. Pull up some tillers and place a tiller between finger and thumb and run your fingers up the stem to find that joint.

Most of the wheat was in that pre-joint or joint stage and it will be difficult to split stems. As you slide the stem between your fingers, you'll feel a little bump, the growing point will be just above this. Split the stem the long way with a thin knife. The tiny head will be about 1/32 to 1/16 of an inch long and it should glisten and be shiny, and a lime green color with some of the stem parts of the head below it darker green. It will look rather moist and turgid.

In contrast, a head that has damage will look pale white or brownish, will be dry or the stem parts will show signs of decaying, wilt, and lodging. Damage will show up as some lodging at various points and the heads may continue to push out, but they may not grow. Again, some of the early tillers may be affected but there will be others that will grow out.

The extent of this variation may depend on the severity of the affected area. A common sign of damage to tillers is that you will see the stems just sitting there, not elongating much and young, new tillers will start to grow around it. Wheats that are of early maturity and were planted in the early part

Views with Van Keith VanSkiike, Extension Director



of September may be of higher risk than others. Remember that the further the head is out of joint stage, the more critical are temperatures. Wheat plants that are jointed 2 to 3 inches can barely stand 20-24 degree temperatures for two hours before injury. Remember, temperatures must saturate the growing point to cause damage. Keep an eye out for army cutworms now.

Seedling alfalfa that has just been planted and has less than three leaves may have a tough time. Usually the researchers will like to say that in the fall, 3 to 4 leaves are needed before a 25 degree killing frost. Alfalfa that was tall and is burned back may be at risk as alfalfa weevil may be attacking new emerging growth. Keep a close eye for weevil or cutworms in alfalfa after top growth is burned back, as this can cause added stress to the early first crop.

Whenever we have an early spring, there is a concern that we may lose plants if the weather suddenly turns cold. Actually, losing plants due to sudden cold is much more a concern in the fall rather than the spring. If plants do not have an opportunity to harden off properly in the fall, a sudden cold snap can freeze tissue and cause tremendous damage and even death. We normally do not have that type of succulent tissue in the early spring and so any damage we see is usually minimal. Leaves may be burned back (looks just like summer scorch) and flowers may be killed but the plant itself is not significantly damaged. We will see some leaf scorching and possibly even terminal shoots being killed but tree death is unlikely. If all the growth on the tree or

shrub is killed, dormant buds will become active and the plant will eventually put out new growth.

Some evergreens are showing burn symptoms and these will most likely re-grow around these spots. Perennial shrubs that are newly transplanted or have been there will suffer some top burn but will send out new shoots. The reproductive parts of all flowering buds is very sensitive to temperature extremes and if there were any plants or trees budding or pollinating, then it is pretty certain that there is damage to those parts. Some flower buds will emerge out but may not have fruit. Apricot trees are the most sensitive at this time. Apricot trees that bloomed last week and started to set fruit are very vulnerable at this stage and will drop their fruit set if affected. Flowering trees will most likely lose their foliage and flowers much faster but will re-grow leaves later.

Our most hardy vegetables can withstand temperatures in the mid-20s without damage. These would include asparagus, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, carrots, turnips and kale. Those that are frost tolerant and can take a light frost include Chinese cabbage, collards, Irish potatoes, Bibb lettuce, mustard, radishes, spinach, Swiss chard and leaf lettuce.

Perennial crops such as rhubarb and asparagus will be frozen back to ground level but should send out new growth. Potatoes that are growing may burn back but will resprout.

New seedlings that were planted such as radishes and beets may be damaged if the top portions of their growth points were frozen. Plant sets like broccoli will be affected similarly if a major portion of the upper growing parts are severely damaged. If you set out some annual bedding plants like Pansy's or Geraniums and the like you may have to re-set then since they are not perennials.

The Extension Office has an excellent publication "Spring Freeze Injury to Kansas Wheat".

Norton man accepts 4-H volunteer award

John Baker, a Journeyman with Midwest Energy in Norton, was recently presented with a \$100 check for the Norton County 4-H program in recognition of his long hours of volunteer service in the community. He is the first Midwest Energy employee to be honored in this way for two consecutive years, having received \$100 for Norton County 4-H in the Employee Volunteerism Program for 2006.

Mr. Baker has worked for the company for over 30 years, in Norton for over 20 years and is married to wife, Cheryl. They have three children: Justin, who works for KDOT in Norton; Kendra, who works for United Northwest Federal Credit Union in Norton; and Lisa, who lives in Norton and is assistant manager at Loves. They

have one granddaughter, Shailyn who lives in Norton.

"Most of my time is consumed with 4-H shooting sports," he said. "I'm a certified instructor and I coach the kids in archery. In last year's fire in Norton, we lost all the archery equipment and we'll use this money from Midwest Energy to purchase new replacement archery supplies."

He works with a Cub Scout Pack in Norton presenting clinics on archery. He works with the Norton County Amusement Association, a home-owned carnival, and he helps operate one of the games during the fair in the summer. Mr. Baker also helps with the city fire department and rural fire department and with the Archery Clinic for the OK Kids program which is associated with

the Prairie Dog State Park.

And, that's not all, he stays busy with Pheasants Forever, working on the Annual Banquet and helping with youth hunts.

"I just really enjoy working with the kids," he said. "I guess it all started with my kids and I never could give it up. We all really appreciate the help and support from Midwest Energy."

Earnie Lehman, President and General Manager, said, "We're really pleased to be able to help support John and the Norton County 4-H program for a second consecutive year. John's efforts with this group and others in Norton County highlight his personal commitment to helping young people and making his community a better place to live."



Members of the Norton International Order of Odd Fellows Lodge looked on as Noble Grand Randy Knoll presented a \$200 check to Elaine Mann, representing God's Pantry. — Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

Odd Fellows give to God's Pantry

By CAROLYN PLOTTS
Wanting to place more emphasis on local benevolence, the Norton Chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) made their first monetary donation of \$200 to God's Pantry.

Randy Knoll, Noble Grand of the Norton chapter, made the presentation at a dinner meeting March 22 at the Town and Country Kitchen Restaurant. Elaine Mann accepted the donation on

behalf of the community food pantry housed at Norton Trinity Episcopal Church.

Mrs. Mann said cash outlay in 2006 was \$9,400 and cash donations totalled \$10,400. This was above and beyond the donated food. She said last year 193 families (made up of 318 adults and 201 children) benefitted from the food pantry. In 2005, 144 families were helped and in 2004, 174 families were assisted.

Anyone wishing to join this philanthropic organization may call Mr. Knoll, 877-2912, Marilyn Colip, 877-5504 or the lodge's office at 874-4263.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Agency Plan developed for Housing Authority

Published in the Norton Telegram on Tuesday, April 10, 2007. (1T)

PUBLIC NOTICE
The Housing Authority of the City of Norton has developed its Agency Plan for Fiscal Year 2006 in compliance with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. It is available for review at the Authority's office located on 213 Horace Greeley Avenue, Norton, KS 67654. The Authority's hours of operation are Monday thru Friday until 2:00 p.m. In addition, a public hearing will be held on May 8, 2007 at the Authority's office at 5:00 p.m. Everyone is invited.

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Norton Schools Staff Spotlight

Classified Employee



Alice Evans

Mrs. Alice Evans is the High School Activity Account secretary and is also secretary for the JH-SH Food Service. She is in her 25th year of employment with USD 211. She and her husband Scott are the parents of two sons. Reading and cooking (when she has the time) are her favorite leisure activities. The best things about her job are the variety of tasks that make up her job and working with the students.

Certified Employee



Jim Green

Mr. Jim Green is completing his 27th year of teaching chemistry and physics at NCHS and he has taught all but one year of his career in Norton. Mr. Green holds both Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Fort Hays State University. He and his wife, Connie, have two sons. Mr. Green lists reading and tennis as his two favorite hobbies. The satisfaction of seeing kids learn is what he likes best about his job.