

## GAINES COUNTY IPM NEWSLETTER

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Volume II, No. 3

February 23, 2009

### ***General Situation***

The dry conditions and low commodity prices have growers deliberating over their 2009 planting intentions. Several growers have expressed an interest in planting alternative crops such as soybeans, safflowers, sesame, and sunflowers. Several of these crops are not well tested in our area and may not yield as promised. I would highly recommend that growers visit with an Extension Agronomist before planting these alternative crops. And like the saying goes “Never put all of your eggs in one basket.” This will help you to minimize your risks.

### ***Extension Workshop to Help Producers Compare Profitability of Crops***

For those growers considering alternative crops, I would highly recommend attending the March 5<sup>th</sup> Extension Workshop that will focus on helping Producers Compare the Profitability of Crops. This workshop will be held on March 5<sup>th</sup> in Lubbock at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center located north of the Airport. The address is 1102 E. FM 1294 (½ mile east of I-27). You can also refer to <http://southplainsprofit.tamu.edu> for more information on Extension Ag Economics, FARM Assistance, Master Marketer, Market Outlook, Futures Charts and Prices, resources on budgets, and other ag economic information.

### ***Soybeans***

The following is information provided by Dr. Calvin Trostle and Dr. Todd Baughman, Extension Agronomists. The amount of irrigation required to produce soybeans may result in yields that tend to be unsatisfactory. Some literature suggests that full irrigation soybeans may take as much as 80% of the irrigation required for corn production. Heat and humidity is another problem with trying to make soybeans yield where they need to for Gaines County. Heat and humidity cannot be controlled and this is why we see very little soybeans in the southern plains and rolling plains. Heat and low humidity at bloom can hurt soybeans even more than peanuts. If growers go ahead and decide to plant soybeans, then they may consider planting Group IV or Group V soybeans. Early Group IV soybeans will have the potential advantage of shortening the season. If growers plant early Group IV soybeans early in the season then they may not last too far into the summer. If growers plant an early Group IV later in the season then they still have the potential to mature and produce a yield. The seeding rate needs to be a much heavier seeding rate than most growers are willing to plant. Growers also need to make sure that they have some way to timely harvest the soybeans, so that they do not lose many to shattering.

### ***Cotton Seed Cost and Technology Fee Comparisons***

The Plains Cotton Growers website <http://www.plainscotton.org> has a link to the “2009 Plains Cotton Growers Seed Cost Calculator.” Growers can determine their seed per acre by simply entering their row spacing and number of seed per foot. Then growers can scroll down the spreadsheet see what the seed and technology fees are for the various cotton varieties.

## Russian Wheat Aphid

Russian Wheat Aphids have been observed in scattered wheat fields in Gaines County (Figure 1). The Russian wheat aphid is lime green. Whereas the Greenbug is pale green with a dark green stripe on the back (Figure 2).



Figure 1. Russian Wheat Aphids on Wheat

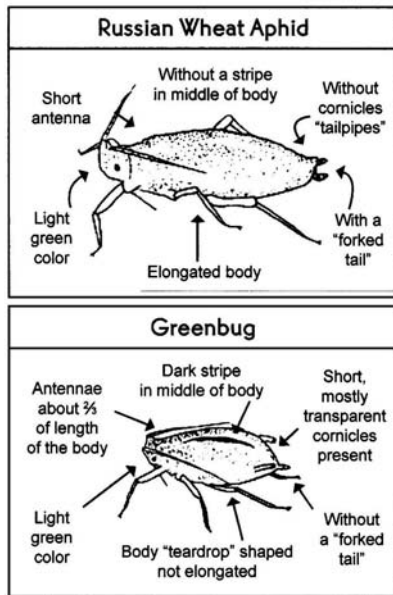


Figure 2. Russian Wheat Aphid and Greenbug comparison

Russian wheat aphids inject a toxin while feeding, causing white and purple longitudinal streaks on leaves (Figure 3). Heavily infested plants appear flattened, and leaf edges roll inward, giving the entire leaf a tube-like appearance. Natural predators and parasites are important in suppressing these aphids and fields should be managed to conserve these natural enemies.

When scouting for Russian wheat aphids, randomly select 100 tillers, each from a different site in the field. Be sure to randomly select the tillers so that you don't bias your sample. Carefully look at each tiller and record it as infested if one or



Figure 3. Wheat with white and purple streaks on leaves

more Russian wheat aphids are present. Then determine the percentage of infested tillers. Use Table 1 to determine if a treatment is justified. For example, if the market value of the crop is projected to be \$50 per acre and control costs are \$9 per acre, the treatment threshold is 36% infested tillers.

**Table 1.** Russian Wheat Aphid Economic Threshold Using Percent Infested Wheat Tillers as the Sampling Unit.

Control cost per acre \$	Market Value of Crop (\$) per Acre					
	50	100	150	200	250	300
	Percent infested tillers					
4	16	8	5	4	3	3
5	20	10	7	5	4	3
6	24	12	8	6	5	4
7	28	14	9	7	6	5
8	32	16	11	8	6	5
9	36	18	12	9	7	6
10	40	20	13	10	8	7
11	44	22	15	11	9	7
12	48	24	16	12	10	8

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## Topdressing Nitrogen Fertilizer

Growers who want to get the most out of their irrigated wheat crop should consider topdressing nitrogen fertilizer before jointing occurs. In wheat fields with poor stands, topdressing nitrogen will not be a big issue unless we get some much need rainfall. In the February 23 issue of Focus on South Plains Agriculture, Dr. Calvin Trostle explains that we are quickly approaching the time at which topdressed nitrogen needs to be applied.

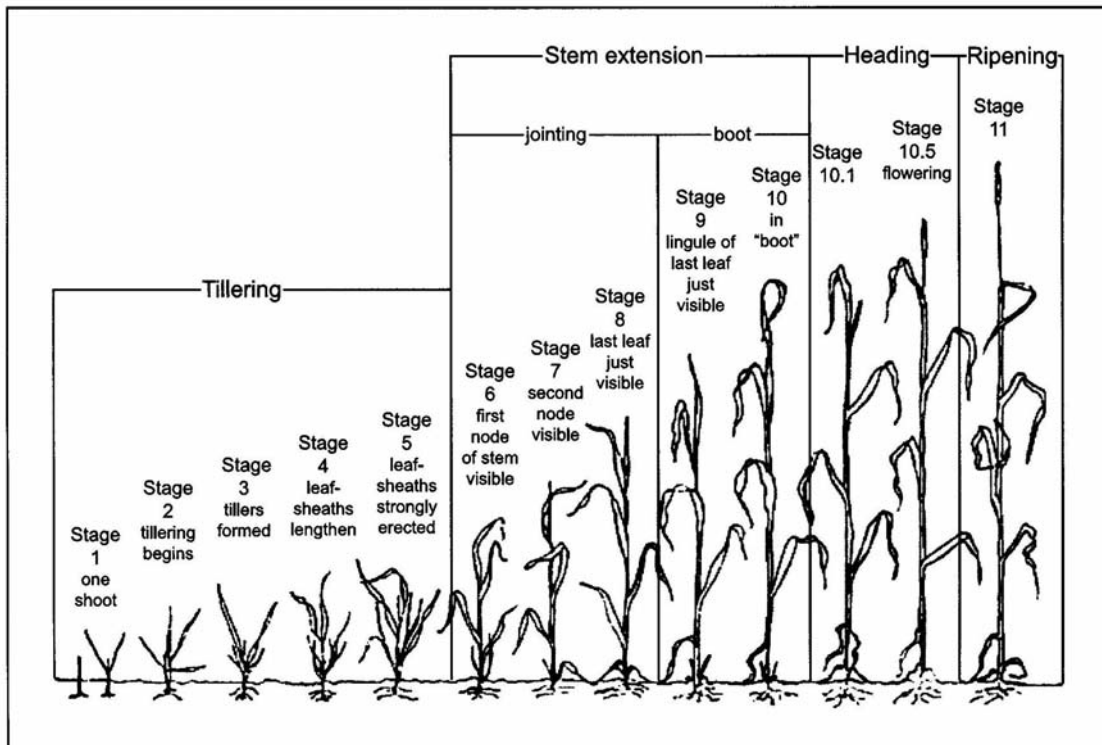


Figure 4. Stages of small grain development

Around March 1<sup>st</sup> (plus or minus 7 days), the growing point in wheat differentiates from producing leaves to determining how many spikelets and seeds per spikelet your crop can potentially have. The goal is to have the nitrogen available for plant uptake when the number of spikelets and number of seed is being determined (“Stage 5” in Figure 4).

Nitrogen applied after jointing will not affect the potential number of seed per head. Jointing (“Stage 6” in Figure 4) is when the first node of the stem is visible. If you cut the stem you will be able to see the head which is being pushed upward and will eventually be exerted from the boot (Figure 5).

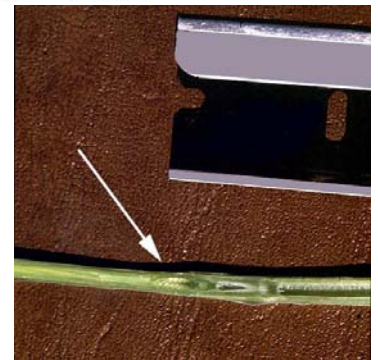


Figure 5. Hollow stem in wheat several days after jointing has begun. Picture from “Focus on South Plains Agriculture.”

### Information for this newsletter was obtained from the following publications:

- Texas AgriLife Extension Service, “Managing Insect and Mite Pest of Texas Small Grains”
- Growth Stages of Wheat: Identification and Understanding Improve Crop Management <http://sanangelo.tamu.edu/agronomy/wheat/whtmang.htm>
- February 23, 2009 Focus on South Plains Agriculture [http://lubbock.tamu.edu/focus/focus2009/Feb\\_23/Feb\\_23.pdf](http://lubbock.tamu.edu/focus/focus2009/Feb_23/Feb_23.pdf)

These publications can be found on the web at <http://agrilifebookstore.org>.

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