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WHEAT RUST DISEASE UPDATE IN TEXAS (February 4, 2010)

Last week, I did some traveling along the southern Texas Coastal Bend and more specifically, in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (although more accurately a delta or floodplain). It was an opportunity look at wheat and other crops in order to assess any diseases present at the time. The Lower Rio Grande Valley includes the southernmost four counties in the state.

Leaf rust was present in wheat at trace levels in Hidalgo County.

Leaf rust was also observed in other cereals in Hidalgo and Willacy Counties.

Except for two fields, the wheat and other cereals (ie. spelt, triticale) observed were those grown as wind barriers in vegetable production (ie. watermelon). Not all locations had leaf rust.

Growth stages observed varied from Feekes scale 2 through 9 (tillering to almost boot).

Hidalgo County is the second southernmost county in Texas. Willacy is the fourth southernmost county in Texas.

Freezes in early December and early to mid-January in this area could potentially cost some vegetable growers up to 50% of their vegetable production but might have helped keep the rust in check early on in January.

I had the opportunity to make this trip with Dr. Tom Isakeit, a fellow plant pathologist stationed at Texas A&M University-College Station.

As the season progresses, I will have further updates on the wheat rust situation in Texas.

Visit: http://amarillo.tamu.edu/programs/agrilife_programs/plant_pathology_extension/index.php

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