

# Texas A&M AgriLife in the North Region



June 16, 2015

## Challenge Brings Educational Opportunities

In my opinion, we do a number of things really well but it seems we are at our best when there is an emerging need that comes out of nowhere. With the blessing of an abundance of moisture we see new challenges such as disease and insects. High moisture combined with cooler temperatures creates the potential for Fusarium issues in wheat and possible future issues in corn. Our opportunity with this issue is to determine the incidence of Fusarium infestation and the potential damage it could cause.

Here is what I need you to do this week;

- Review the Lync conference posted at <http://amarillo.tamu.edu/facultystaff/danny-nusser/> if you were not at the training yesterday. This only affects D-1 and the counties north of Lubbock in D-2. Password is: disease
- Dr. French's power point is also located at the site above.
- Locate and scout for symptoms in 5 fields in your county where there is currently irrigated wheat following corn or strip tilled or no till. You might see symptoms before getting to the field but you will need to enter that field (might be wet).
- If you do not see any symptoms or don't have irrigated wheat in your county, simply send Dr. Ron French an email stating such and carbon me.
- If you find evidence of the symptoms, bag 20 heads in a zip lock bag (add a dry paper towel to absorb moisture) or paper bag (stapled or taped). Bring or mail it to Dr. French at the Amarillo Center within 2 days.
- You should label the bag to identify the county and field plus your estimate of the % infestation of that field. Just write this on the bag or simply put the information in the bag.

Dr. French is completing a fact sheet on this and other potential diseases that you should get shortly and hopefully including some best management practices for producers that have levels that could cause problems. Some of these would be; more air on the combine to reduce the lighter kernels (therefore fewer grains with infection) and blending poor samples with good samples to reduce the amount of infection in grain. It should be noted that recent issues have included reduced heads, white heads, sooty molds, and head blight, including Fusarium head blight. Because of the potential that fungi in kernels may produce toxins, Dr. French recently tested a sample showing 65% shriveled kernels from a sample with Fusarium head blight (FHB). He tested for Deoxynivalenol (DON), also known as vomitoxin, but the sample tested negative (0 to less than 1%) for this specific toxin. The point is, shriveled grain and infected heads does not mean problems at the elevator because shriveled seed or Fusarium head blight does not mean that DON will be produced, as toxin production is dependent on numerous factors, including the strain or population of *Fusarium* present. Hence the need for testing fields for DON.

We need samples in order to get a true picture of what's out there and how we can direct producers with problem fields. Until you have that information there is no need at all to cause alarm for producers and more importantly elevator managers. The last thing we need is to produce information that has a negative effect on markets and there not be an actual problem. As evidenced above, just because you see head blight in a field does not mean the quality and marketability has been affected. Thanks to those of you that attended yesterday and I look forward to seeing and hearing your results this week.

Danny Nusser, Regional Program Leader—North Region