

Spring Scouting

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. In this case I would agree. The example below is a wireworm worthy of Boone and Crocket listing. I found this one in a late seeded winter wheat field in Warden last year. The following spring we noticed some thinning of the stand out in the middle of the field. Upon further investigation we found this guy, alive and very well, as were all of his brothers. Look closely at what he was feeding on.....pretty severe damage was done to a large portion of the field. This happened to be an irrigated field, so the producer had not put any insecticide on the seed in the fall. Even if he had, it probably still would not have been enough protection to stop spring feeding. My point here is to look at your fields often for damage. You can fix this issue post-discovery, but it much easier to do preemptively. Call us for more info on this.



Soil Testing – I can't figure out why some farmers are so anti-testing in crop. In Eastern Franklin County we have had 4.2" of rainfall in January, and January is not over. You all know Nitrogen is soluble in water, so where do you think your fertilizer is now.....Hmmm!

Yes, I am trying to guilt trip you into testing the fertility in your crop. I have been poking holes all over the country and find very few fields with enough Nitrogen in place to maximize yield potential given the water we have available. Remember that Nitrogen does not go from your fertilizer

machine directly into the plant. Most of it goes two places; one is to feed the billions of soil micro-organism that are responsible for decomposing the residue from previous years, and second it goes to your plant. But only in the Nitrate form. The Nitrite form has to convert to a usable form. That conversion begins when the soil temp gets to be 54^oF. When is that? About May first, too late to help this crop!

So....make sure if you apply fertilizer this spring it is **ammonium nitrate**. Liquid urea is a waste of time. So is anything that requires conversion. While you are testing for N this spring, check your available moisture also. Have it recorded in inches per foot. That is how you do the math to figure out how much yield potential you have, and that leads you to the Nitrogen numbers, simple math. Here is one other fact most growers don't think about....part of the Nitrogen a wheat plant uses, goes to make straw correct? So, which straw will break down more quickly after harvest, one with a high carbon to nitrogen ratio, or straw with higher Nitrogen content than carbon? Obviously, the second. You will recapture more nitrogen, and do it faster in the situation where the straw has a high Nitrogen ratio. So straw is a Nitrogen sink? Yes, like a bank! You get it back during the next crop. In order to understand how much is returned to you, you have to be willing to do some soil sampling. Happy testing!!



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