Count the Wheat Tillers and Control Henbit, Chickweed

Jill Scheidt, agronomy specialist with University of Missouri Extension was unable to physically scout wheat fields this week but didn’t prevent her from making some helpful crop recommendations.

“In order to determine if an early spring nitrogen application should be made or not, count the average tiller population in the field,” said Scheidt.

If tiller density is below 60 tillers per square foot, wheat should receive an early spring nitrogen application to encourage more tiller growth. If tiller populations are above 90 tillers per square foot, no early spring nitrogen application should be made.

“Large nitrogen applications can lead to excessively lush growth and tiller population, which can lead to lodging and wheat being vulnerable to disease. If you have a good tiller population, wait until just before the joint stage to make a nitrogen application,” said Scheidt.

This is also a good time to scout fields for henbit and chickweed. These weeds can reduce yields by an estimated 10 percent each year.

“Henbit, chickweed and all weeds should be treated before reaching two to four inches in height or diameter to gain the best control,” said Scheidt.

Harmony Extra is an effective herbicide to control henbit, chickweed, wild garlic and many other winter annual weeds in wheat. Most weeds need .6-.9 ounces of Harmony Extra per acre to effectively control weeds.

“The higher rate should be used in heavy infestations or for hard to control weeds. Read the label for specific rates and application timing,” said Scheidt.

MORE INFORMATION
The weekly field scouting report is sponsored by University of Missouri and Barton County Extension. For more information on the scouting report, or to learn how to receive the information earlier by telephone, contact the Barton County Extension Center at (417) 682-3579.