**Wheat and fescue diseases can be toxic to livestock**

Jill Scheidt, agronomy specialist with University of Missouri Extension, scouted fields near Arcola in Dade County and south of Hwy. 126 and west of I-49 in Barton County on June 24.

**Wheat Report**
Scheidt observed fully mature, ready to harvest wheat. Sprouted kernels, Fusarium head scab and sooty head mold were among the problems found in area wheat fields.

“Adjust combine settings to throw out small seeds to reduce dockages,” said Scheidt. “Fusarium head scab produces a mycotoxin that is toxic to livestock and humans when ingested and inhaled, so feeding is not recommended.”

Scheidt does not recommend saving disease infected seed for next year due to reduced germination and increased risk of the disease overwintering in the grain bin. “Treating disease infected seed will not improve viability, it only protects against soil-borne diseases and seedling blights,” said Scheidt.

**Corn Report**
Scheidt also observed corn is in the eight leaf to the silking stage. “Nitrogen deficiency is still being seen. Once corn is shoulder-high, leaf burn caused by nitrogen, can have an impact on yield as the upper leaves are responsible for filling kernels,” said Scheidt. Caution should be taken to avoid leaf burn to upper leaves when applying nitrogen. Peter Scharf, MU Extension state fertility specialist, recommends using a color sensor, such as a green seeker as the most efficient way to determine nitrogen needs in corn.

**Soybean Report**
Scheidt observed emerging soybeans to soybeans in the first trifoliolate stage. “A little slug and wildlife feeding was seen, but is unlikely to affect plant health,” said Scheidt.

**Fescue Report**
Scheidt observed ergot in several fescue pastures. “Ergot is identified by a black growth on seeds, sometimes, this growth is pink in color before turning black. Ergot is toxic to livestock, so seedheads should be clipped so that seed heads fall to the ground and are unavailable for livestock consumption,” said Scheidt.

According to Craig Roberts, MU Extension state forage specialist, hay that contains ergot infected seed head can be ammoniated to reduce toxicity. “If 30 percent of seedheads are infected, ergot poisoning is extremely likely,” said Roberts. MU’s toxicology lab is available to test ergot and Fusarium levels in crops.

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.

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**Black ergot on fescue**