

According to the USDA Crop Progress and Condition report as of Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 89% of Missouri's corn was mature. As of the October 11<sup>th</sup> report date, 37% of the corn was harvested, similar to last year but 35% behind the five-year average. Turning our attention to west central Missouri specifically, 37% of the corn crop has been harvested and is actually 4% ahead of last year's harvest pace.

As corn harvest progresses and wheat planting continues, wheat growers should review the results from the University of Missouri Extension soft red winter wheat variety trials, which are available online. The 2009 Missouri Crop Performance report includes variety data such as yield, test weight, winter survival, lodging, and Fusarium head blight severity on more than 55 varieties at 7 locations across the state. Access the results at: <http://plantsci.missouri.edu/extension/cropperf.htm>

The Hessian fly-free date of October 6<sup>th</sup> for west central and central Missouri has now passed and as such, there is far less risk of Hessian fly infestations for newly planted wheat. It is important to plant wheat following the Hessian fly-free date but yet early enough to allow the crop to achieve adequate fall growth. Management decisions made in the fall, such as planting date, seeding rate, and nitrogen management, play a large role in determining the extent of fall wheat growth and tiller development. While the main stem is typically the most productive head in wheat, K-State University reports that under normal conditions, as much as 70 percent of the grain yield can come from the primary and secondary tillers.

In a report from K-State, their research found that with an October 11<sup>th</sup> planting date, 69% of the total grain yield came from fall tillers while only 31% came from spring tillers. Fall tiller development was shown to be especially important. Comparatively, with an October 28<sup>th</sup> planting date, only 44% of the grain yield was from fall tillers and 56% from spring tillers. With respect to yield, the October 11<sup>th</sup> planting date was 3 bushels per acre higher than the October 28<sup>th</sup> planting date. Planting date affects yield by influencing the development of tillers. Growers are encouraged to plant wheat within the optimum planting window because late planting results in inadequate fall tillering, which cannot be compensated for by spring tillers.