

Prepare For Winter Grain Planting

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The decisions made between now and the time winter grains are planted play a major role in determining the performance of these crops, said a Penn State agronomist.

"Most of the decisions that affect grain yield should be made

well in advance of planting," said Dr. Elwood Hatley, professor of agronomy in the College of Agricultural Sciences. "These decisions involve site and variety selection, seed treatment, tillage, planting dates and seeding rates."

Site selection is extremely important when planting winter

crops. Winter grains, especially barley, should be planted in well-drained fields. When planted in poorly drained soils, these crops are subject to excessive winter kill. "Winter wheat also should not follow wheat in crop rotations," Hatley said. "This can lead to diseases, such as the root dis-

ease known as 'take all'."

It's best to choose winter grain varieties that have high yield potential and disease resistance. Variety performance reports are published annually by Penn State's agronomy department and by universities in surrounding states. "Use as much of this infor-

mation as possible when selecting new varieties," Hatley said.

Seed- and soil-borne diseases can reduce yields of winter wheat and barley. "This is especially true for wheat seedings this fall, because Fusarium head scab and Septoria glume blotch have been present in a large portion of the state," Hatley said. "Other diseases affecting winter crops include seed decays, seedling blights, and loose and covered smuts."

To protect against these and other diseases, seeding should not be done before recommended planting dates, and seed treatments should contain both a protectant fungicide and a systemic fungicide. "Protectant fungicides increase yields, improve seedling vigor and eliminate covered smut in wheat and barley," Hatley said.

Swine AI Short Course Set

LEESPORT (Berks Co.)—The Penn State Cooperative Extension is offering a swine AI one-day session on Nov. 14 at the Leesport Farmer's Market.

The program will allow those using AI to update their techniques and newcomers to learn, because everyone will have time to practice collection and

breeding.

Starting at 10 a.m., the program's topics include "Fitting Artificial Insemination Into Your Herd" by Ken Kephart, Penn State swine specialist; "Artificial Insemination—Striving for Perfection," a video by the National Pork Producers; "Heat Detection and the Insemination Process" by

Mark Lewis, manager, Palmyra Swine Unit of White Oak Mills in Elizabethtown; and AI practice and boar collection.

The program will adjourn at 2:30 p.m. Registration fee is \$8 per person, which includes handouts and a noon meal. Animals

will be provided by Mt. View Farms, Frystown.

For more information and to register, contact Clyde Myers, Penn State Cooperative Extension in Berks County, at Berks County Agricultural Center, P.O. Box 520, Leesport, PA 19533, (610) 378-1327.

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"Treatment with the proper systemic fungicide eliminates loose smut and covered smut of wheat and barley and prevents damage from seed decay and seedling blights."

A uniform seed placement of 1.0 to 1.5 inches deep also is important for successful winter grain production. "Some tillage is required to assure that your equipment is placing the seed at a uniform depth," Hatley said. "Growers also need to adjust their equipment's planting speed to match soil conditions. Excessive planting speeds increase the amount of variability in seeding depth and lead to lower yields."

Seeding density for winter grains should be adjusted to produce between 1.2 and 1.5 million plants per acre. "This means your equipment should deposit 18 to 20 seeds, with 90 percent germination, per foot of row when seeding in 7-inch rows," Hatley said. "If you are planting past recommended dates, the germination rate will be lower and you'll need to increase the seeding rate up to 30 percent."

For information about planting dates and other considerations for winter grains, consult the "Penn State Agronomy Guide." The 214-page publication contains detailed information on corn, grain sorghum, soybeans for grain, small grains and forage crops. Included are sections on pest management, soil fertility management, crop storage and erosion control.

The guide is available for \$7 from the Penn State Cooperative Extension office in your county or from the Publications Distribution Center, 112 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 865-6713.