Field Day Topics

(Continued from Page A1)

fungi reproduce readily in wheat planted no-till or with little cultivation.

Many wheat varieties show weak resistance to scab. The scab mold appears as a light, furry, almost powdery substance (like a scab on human skin) on the grain itself. On the wheat leaves, the scab, or fusarium, shows up as dark lesions.

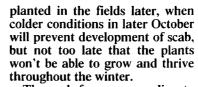
The scab is of concern to grain elevators because of the toxins called mycotoxins --- that are produced. The wheat mids are rejected because of their ability to generate the mycotoxins, also called vomitoxins, which are dangerous to animals, according to DeWolf.

DeWolf noted the pathogens, already in the environment, show up on corn residue as tiny black grains, or fruiting bodies, that look like black pepper. The grains generate spores that travel throughout the wheat fields.

Wheat fields that are in flowering stage are the most vulnerable to the spores. The fungus spreads into the central stem and into the grain.

For wheat growers, weather conditions at flowering can spell disaster if infected. If the temperature is 75 degrees or higher with high humidity and wet conditions, "it will favor scab develop-ment," DeWolf noted.

Winter wheat fields planted too early, in September in many cases, could readily become susceptible. The key is to get wheat



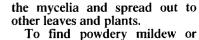
The scab fungus, according to DeWolf, survives in pasture grasses, ditches, fence rows - it's "a fusarium of the grasses," he said.

Scab management includes proper crop rotation (don't plant wheat after corn), destroying corn residue (clean cultivation may help), and staggering the variety types to provide an "escape window, and spread out your risk," said DeWolf.

As for spraying a fungicide on the wheat, later sprays are not useful because it is hard to hit a vertical head surface area, noted DeWolf. The last time to spray a fungicide would be at the fiveleaf growth stage. There are also other timing concerns and growth stage label restrictions.

As for powdery mildew, varieties show good resistance. The fluffy white mycelia growth on the leaves are located on "broad, flat surfaces," so they are easy to see and control. The mycelia look like tiny icicles,

and the spores are produced in chains, like a string of footballs. The spores break off



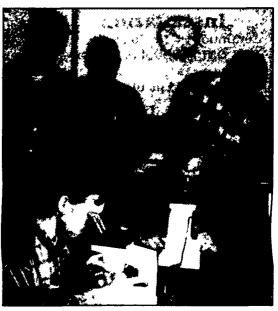
To find powdery mildew or scab, a simple hand lens is all that's needed. Look at the main tillers of the plant to get an idea about control. It's good to have a sharp pocketknife on hand to cut into the stem to determine stages for treatment.

Tours were also conducted at the field day.

Also at the meeting, Greg Roth, Penn State associate professor of agronomy, spoke about several programs ongoing in Pennsylvania and in Maryland for providing analyses of added values for grain crops.

Two programs stand out. One, in Kent County, Maryland, includes a \$239,000 grant to study soybeans and wheat for export and local processing. Another, in Oueen Anne's County, amounts to \$500,000 for similar studies.

Pennsylvania is working on a hard wheat variety program to provide better protein content. Another program is looking to use barley to provide more starch and potential poultry feed. Both would require good disease tolerance.



Scab fruiting spores in corn residue are what these crop consultants are looking at under microscopes during the Penn State-sponsored Wheat Scouting and Pest Management Field Day in Landisville.



Roof Systems/



Speakers at the wheat field day included, from left, John Rowehl, crops agent; Greg Roth, Penn State associate professor; Del Voight, crops agent; and Eric DeWolf, Penn State plant pathologist. Photos by Andy Andrews, editor



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