Stripe Rust in Morrow County

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Stripe rust was discovered in a field of hard red winter wheat near the western edge of Morrow County on Tuesday, May 1st. Fungal spores were prevalent on 2.5% to 5% of the plants growing in this particular area.

**Symptoms**

If caught early, a linear orientation (stripe) of rust can be observed on the topside of leaves. Stripes are less evident if environmental conditions allow disease to spread – yellow-to-orange colored pustules may be widely distributed across the leaf surface. If left unchecked, leaves turn yellow and eventually die.

**Effect on Yield**

Stripe rust affects yield by reducing green leaf area. This, in turn, reduces sugar and nutrient supply to developing kernels. The flag leaf (and the next lower leaf on the plant) do most of the “work” and should be protected from infection. Yield loss in infected areas can be significant.

**When to Spray**

For this year’s crop, a one-time application between boot and heading should be cost-effective if 5% of the field is showing signs of rust AND if damage to the flag leaf is anticipated.

Conditions that favor spread of the disease include: (1) big, thick stands of wheat, (2) temperatures that range from 50 to 65°F, and (3) intermittent rainfall or dew. Fungicides commonly used to control stripe rust have residual activity for two to three weeks. Spraying too early can be costly because a second application may be necessary.

**Read the Label**

*Pay Attention to Growth Stage Restrictions*

Be careful not to apply fungicides at growth stages that are off-label. The last time I checked, Tilt could not be applied after flag-leaf emergence and Quilt (and some other products) could be applied up to Feeke’s growth stage 10.5 – early heading. Check the label to see if these growth stage restrictions are still in effect.