



Field Notes for The Week Of

3-14-22

Learning About Winter Wheat

I knew we would pay for a beautiful beginning of March, as we enter the second week of March the landscape is covered with that white stuff! As they say if you don't like the weather in Southern Ohio just wait a day it will be different tomorrow. I believe the process of weather change is quicker, I would say wait a couple of hours and it will change. This past week was a challenging week for me to get out and do scouting due to a fierce battle between me and a nasty head cold, but I did manage to stop by two wheat fields on my way to the doctor's office (dedication to the job)! I have been keeping a close eye on the few wheat fields in the county to see growth progress as the days begin to warm and lengthen. I believe most of the wheat that I have scouted is in feeks growth stages 3 to 4. If you grow winter wheat or are thinking about growing winter wheat in the future, it is important that you learn the different growth stages. The main reason for learning growth stages is to make proper management decisions at the right time, pest scouting, nitrogen, fungicide, herbicide applications are examples of key management decisions that are made based off growth stages. Winter wheat has a growth stage scale called the feeks scale. The feeks scale is the most used growth scale in the United States. The Zadoks scale can also be used but most common it is used in Europe. The Feeks growth stage scale is numerical scale given to each plant growth stage as the plant emerges. This scale can have decimal values that represents # of tillers within growth stages or stage between the time heading begins and grain is mature. I am not going to go through all the stages of growth, just the stages that you are most likely seeing today in the field and the management decisions to consider.

- **Feeks 1.0** – emergence of your seedling wheat, I always encourage conducting a stand count at this time.
- **Feeks 2.0-3.0** – Tillering will begin during this stage of growth. I believe this can be one of the most critical stages for wheat growth. More tillering equals more yield and healthier plants. Substages such as 2.3 indicate there is 3 tillers or plant shoots from the main stem. At this stage of growth fall or early spring nitrogen applications of 30-50lb/ac can give good yield responses due to encouraging the plant to produce more tillers.
- **Feeks 4-5** – This stage of growth is called green up. Plant will begin to break winter dormancy and have erect growth. This is the most optimal time to apply spring nitrogen to healthy stand. At this stage of growth head size and spikelet numbers are determined.



