

DIVISION OF RESEARCH & EXTENSION

Keeping Wheat Crop Free of Rust

Identifying wheat rust

Wheat is a cash crop selling at KSh.2200 to 3000 per 90Kg bag, but stem rust can cause up to 100% loss of the harvest. The new and most deadly rust is Ug99 which affect the old resistant varieties such as Robin. Rust attacked wheat has reddish-brown spores with stem looking like a piece of metal that has rust. When the crop approach maturity, the spores turn from brown to black hence the name black rust. The infected crops produce few tillers and harvested grains are smaller and shrivelled.



A Ug99 infested wheat crop on the right and a more resistant variety on the left at the KARI centre, Njoro, Kenya

How to Control Stem Rust in Wheat

1. Check the crop every week for symptoms of the disease.
2. Spray twice, 60 days and 75-80 days after planting for prevention infection.
3. Apply Fungicide once an infection is noted. The registered fungicides include Nativio 300 SC, Prosaro 250 EC, Folicur 250 WP, Silvacur 375 EC, Orius 25 EW, AmistarXtra 260 SC, Acanto Plus, Abacus SE, Tebucure 250 EW, Twiga Epox and Fezan 250 EW. A litre of fungicide is currently going for about Ksh. 2800 which is only enough for a hectare (2.5 acres).
4. The number of sprays will depend on the severity of the infection. When the infection is severe you can spray up to 5 times but when mild you can spray twice
5. Rotate wheat with a non-cereal crop such as beans. Remember to remove the volunteer wheat crop during rotation.
6. Plant new resistant varieties which include Eagle 10, Korongo and King bird.

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