

Winter-Damaged Winter Wheat

April 2017

La Crosse Seed continues to hear more reports of winter-damaged winter wheat stands across the northern tier of the Midwest. It can be difficult to judge how harmed a stand is, as winter wheat develops largely in the spring. Typically, a stand of 20+ plants/sq. ft. is sufficient to maximize grain or forage yields, but even stands as low as 15 plants/sq. ft. may warrant leaving the field, given that several challenges arise when trying to interseed other options:

- 1) Spring wheat can be interseeded into winter wheat, however, expect wide differences in harvest date. If using wheat as forage, this may be less of an issue (keep in mind that silage quality will be affected by large differences in maturity).
- 2) If strictly for forage and not for taking to grain yield, plant winter wheat into affected areas
- 3) If the entire field is affected, consider planting a different small grain as early as possible (consider spring barley, as it matures earlier than other small grains)
- 4) Depending on forage needs, consider planting other spring or summer annuals (i.e., spring peas, clovers, annual ryegrass, forage sorghums)

The challenge is often compounded since whole fields may not be damaged, as only certain parts may be exposed to extreme winter conditions (due to field landscape, residue and other factors).

Useful References:

Below are useful references for additional considerations when making these decisions:

- University of Minnesota: <http://bit.ly/2p37uaC>
- Ohio State University: <http://bit.ly/2oHhEfO>
- Manitoba: <http://bit.ly/2nMX26N>