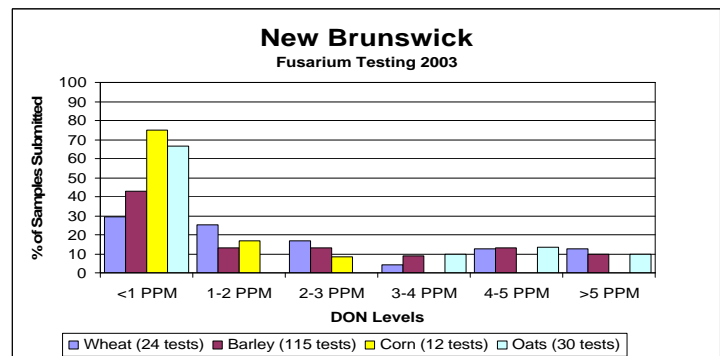




Fusarium Head Blight Newsletter

The summer of 2003 was a bad year for Fusarium Head Blight infection in barley, wheat, corn and oats in New Brunswick producing some lots with high levels of the mycotoxin DON (deoxynivalenol). (See chart). This disease however, is not new to the region and losses have also been reported in past years. Growers in PEI and Nova Scotia were also affected losing both yield and sales in 2003. Fusarium is a severe problem in Ontario and Quebec and has spread into Manitoba and Saskatchewan. A lot of work has been done in many areas to combat this disease but advancements have been disappointingly slow.

Warm wet weather and poor drying conditions during the period from heading to soft dough increases the risks of infection on the grain head. Last year these conditions occurred during July with some areas receiving twice their normal rainfall. The risk of disease also increases with the amount of carryover from the previous season, which will be high for our region in 2004. If you would like to know more about Fusarium, the factheet, "**Fusarium Head Blight of Cereals in Atlantic Canada**" is available on NBDFA's website or at the local departmental agriculture office.



There are differences in disease susceptibility between varieties of oat, wheat, barley, and even between 2-row and 6-row barley. Ratings for disease resistance are listed in Publication 100-B, "**2004 Cereal Guide to Cultivar and Pesticide Selection**" available on the NBDFA's website or at the local departmental agriculture office.

It is always recommended to use certified seed but if you insist on planting non-certified seed then you should consider extra cleaning to remove lightweight, diseased seeds and use a registered seed treatment. Seed infected with Fusarium has lower vigour, increased seed rot and will reduce plant populations especially if germination conditions are poor. Therefore, it is very important to conduct a germination test. Seed treatments can help with this part of the disease cycle but do not control Fusarium head infections later in the season. Never replant into infected fields and deep incorporation of residue is recommended.

An emergency registration for Folicur 432 F (**for wheat only**) has been supported for the 2004 season. This fungicide when applied at early flowering has been shown to reduce Fusarium damage and subsequent DON levels. Wheat growers should review the potential benefits and costs of application, especially if the season is dry during and after flowering. Other provinces applying for emergency registrations in 2004 include Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and PEI.

Remember when taking samples for DON testing the sample must be kept dry prior to and during shipment. If you have any questions, contact your local departmental agriculture office for more information.