

Is Your Winter Wheat Dead or Alive! A Crown Viability Test

1. Dig 20 to 50 plants for testing from each concerned site, keeping crowns intact. Select plants from representative areas of the field, especially if you suspect damage in certain areas.
2. Using cool water, gently rinse soil from plants.
3. Clip all the roots off within 1/8 inch of the crown.
4. Clip stems about 1 to 1½ inches from the crown.
 - Approximately where the greenish and whitish areas meet.
5. Wrap the sample in dampened paper towels.
6. Place sample in plastic bag and seal.
 - Sealed to prevent dehydration.
7. Place sample into refrigerator for 24 hours
 - Prevent plant shock resulting from temperature differential.
8. Remove sample from refrigerator and leave at room temperature for up to 10 days. (Growth activity should be visible as soon as 24 hours)
9. Examine samples for shoot growth.
 - No regrowth indicates a dead crown.
 - Limited regrowth can indicate an unhealthy crown.
 - A 1 to 1 ½ inch regrowth indicates a healthy crown (may take up to 7-10 days).

Questions or comments, please contact Aaron Esser, Agronomist, Lincoln-Adams Area Extension, Ritzville at ph: (509) 659-3210 or e-mail: at aarons@wsu.edu