



Colorado State University Extension
Golden Plains Area Extension

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For Immediate Release

March 6, 2017

Testing Wheat for Life

(Burlington, Colo.)

Environmental conditions affect plant growth in many ways. Conditions that are too dry or too wet, too cold or too hot can all affect wheat production and survival. Determining whether wheat plants are alive in the spring due to adverse growing conditions should be done before spending production dollars on those acres.

Visual inspection:

1. Dig 10 wheat plants from the worst spots in the field (hilltops, driest areas, etc.).
2. Cut plants diagonally and examine inside the root/shoot areas, especially inside the crown area.
3. Healthy plants will exhibit cream or light colored internal "plumbing" (plant tissue).
4. Discolored or brown colored internal plant tissue indicated dead plants.

Fields should be abandoned if more than 50% of plants are dead and dead plants are uniformly distributed. In addition, if large areas are found not viable, then those areas should be considered not productive and also be considered for abandonment.

In addition, small wheat plants can be transplanted into a soil medium and brought into the house. Water and warm wheat plants. If new growth isn't observed in 10 days, wheat plants are not alive.

Source: Crop Watch

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